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MYSTERIES;

OR,

GLIMPSES OF THE SUPERNATURAL

CONTAINING

ACCOUNTS OF THE SALEM WITCHCRAFT—THE COCK-LANE GHOST—THE ROCHESTER RAPPINGS—THE STRATFORD MYSTERIES—ORACLES—ASTROLOGY—DREAMS—DEMONS—GHOSTS—SPECTRES, &C. &C.

BY

CHARLES WYLLYS ELLIOTT.

NEW YORK:
HARPER & BROTHERS.

1852.

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TO THE

SPIRIT

THAT INSPIRES MY FRIEND,

CATHERINE M. SEDGWICK,

THESE SKETCHES OF SPIRITS

AND SPIRITUAL THINGS

ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

Why Write or Read this Book?

As the world is filled with Mysteries which are Real, so it is overrun with those which are False; it is not easy to know what is True and what False. The senses are easily deceived, and it is only by investigation and comparison—analysis and synthesis, that we can hope to arrive at a knowledge of the LAW under which appearances may be classed, and by means of which they may be tested. It seems certain that Man changes from age to age in his beliefs and knowledges; it seems equally certain that God does not change, but is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, and as he has done so he now does.

To save ourselves from the error and misery of the Past, to be taught by its experience, is the part of Wisdom: for we learn through history of the strange doings of Magicians and Necromancers, that sorcery and alchymy have had their high-priests—that full-grown ghosts have stalked in the excited brains of men, and maddened the world with fear—that prophets and priests have preached new revelations—that Fanaticism has

counted more followers than Truth—that men have died in bitter agony, victims to the superstitious fears of even Christian men—or of the blind passions of mad pharisees. Such things have been, it is for us to ask, "Shall they again be?" and to answer our question. We would know the Truth, and we must study not only the PRESENT but the PAST, and thus learn to know the FUTURE.

These Glimpses of the Supernatural are commended to the honest attention of believers.

C. W. E.

NEW HAVEN, May, 1852.

Prelude.

"Now there are another sort that reject Fortune and Chance both, and will not abide them, but attribute the events and issues of things to their own severall starres, and goe by the fatall horoscope or ascendent of their nativities: affirming that the same shall ever befall which once hath been set down and decreed by God: so as hee forever after may sit still and rest himself. And this opinion beginneth now to take deepe root, insomuch as both the learned and also the rude and ignorant multitude, run that way on end. From hence (behold) proceed the warnings and admonitions of lightnings, the foreknowledge of oracles, the predictions of soothsaiers, yea, and other contemptible things not worthie to be once spoken of; as sneezing and stumbling with the foot, are accounted matters of presage," &c.—(Pliny, Nat. Hist. bk. ii. London, 1601.)

So wrote Pliny, but the reader will, if he reads, find that Pliny did not know every thing.

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He who SEEKS, finds!

"It is better for a man to say nothing and BE, than to say he is and not to be!" So too for a spirit.

Man can reverently ask, What IS? He cannot make the true false, nor the false true.

The Salem Witchcraft.

Letting the eye run backward along the great highway of Time, we discover much overgrown with moss and hoared with ancient mold,—about the year of our Lord 1691–2, a guide-post with a finger-board marked in *red* letters Salem Witchcraft. Nigh this, sustaining its decaying strength, stands an "honest and devout perhaps, but sufficiently credulous man" (as Walter Scott calls him), one "Magnalia" Mather; Reverend and Doctor of Divinity, son of Increase, author of "Wonders of the Invisible World," "Remarkable Providences," &c.:—books which teach "that the Devil inflicts plagues, wars, diseases, tempests, and can render the most solid things invisible, and can do things above and against the course of *nature* and all natural causes."* Curious books certainly, and much commended in their day by ministers and other religious persons; books, however, which we should now be loth to introduce into Sunday, or other schools. Nature meaning the showing forth of God (if it be any thing but a vague term), it fol-

* Cited by Calef Letters to Mr. M. p. 112.

lows that God is overcome in this wise by the Devil, and we thus have the ancient Manichee speculations actualized—"realized"—in the eastern part of Massachusetts in the year of our Lord 1691–2, and earlier.

It seemed enough that those rugged old Puritans should have been grievously afflicted, now for seventy years gone; what with "wars with the Indians, wars with the Dutch,"* "excessive rates of wages," "differences between the governor and his deputy," differences between man and man, and man and Indian, "snow knee-deep," "infectious diseases of small-pox, &c.," "diverse profane and notorious evil persons" who would not confess and "be comfortably received into the bosom of the church;" what with "drinking of toasts," Roger Williams' heresies, quakers, Mrs. Hutchinson, and much, much more, besides "our own evil passions and desires," one would think that the Devil himself might have been content: but it was not so; as in Job's hard case, he persisted in his pestering, troublesome ways, adding other elements of mischief, and so far as one can now judge, without doing himself, or any body, much good.

That the Devil then was let loose and went up and down in the said eastern part of Massachusetts seeking to devour, raging and ramping in various ways, we have enough of proof. He had many helpers, for he too works with means, and mostly through women (?) The Indians also were supposed

* Read Winthrop's Journal.

to be worshipers of the Devil, and their Powows to be wizards;* the Reverend Magnalia Mather (the name "Cotton" is omitted for fear of giving offense now) says, in his story of Margaret Rule's dire afflictions,† "Know then that this remarkable Indian being a little time before he died at work in the wood, making of tar, there appeared unto him a black man of terrible aspect and more than human dimensions, threatening bitterly to kill him if he did not promise to leave off preaching to his countrymen, particularly that he would say nothing more of Jesus Christ:" but the Indian was stanch, declared he would do "more than ever I did:" whereupon the black man tried to get him to sign his name in "a book of considerable thickness" with "pen and *ink*," but the Indian refused, and fell into a "fervent and pious prayer," "whereupon the demon vanished." Magnalia tells this in good faith, and has it upon what is called "reliable testimony." The only thing which would stagger *us* is that the demon introduces ink instead of blood; and we do all of us know that a compact with Satan is not binding unless signed with the latter.

We at the present day shall not at all gain a comprehension of these fearful mysteries, unless we endeavor to understand the spirit of that time, unless we earnestly try to picture to ourselves the fearfulness of the belief that "the old serpent, the enemy of souls," was everywhere about, driving a brisk business, and recruiting his devilish army in

* Hutchinson, vol. ii. p. 16. † Calef, p. 20.

such ways as no recruiting sergeant now can practice; he having only "Rum and Glory" with which to break down scruples, or "conquer one's prejudices,"* while this Satan had other wiles, as we shall see.

But let us start fairly and plainly. Blackstone, the oracle of British law, declares in the strongest terms his belief in witchcraft. "To deny the possibility, nay, the actual existence of witchcraft and sorcery, is at once flatly to contradict the revealed word of God in various passages, both of the Old and New Testament, and the thing itself is a truth to which every nation hath borne testimony," &c.† This belief has been supposed necessary to a sustaining of the truths of the Bible, and in earlier times systematic efforts have been made to push the people to credulity; even Dr. Johnson is quoted, and John Wesley says, "They well know (whether Christians or not), that giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible."‡ The careful reader will note that I am no ways endorsing the opinions or beliefs of any man or of any age, but giving as far as I may, some glimpses of what has been, and of what is. One thing we may be sure of, that "gentlemen and scholars" never have been exempt from the common failings of humanity; that ministers are not infallible, the greater the pity; so that it is not permitted to us to reform the world by simply manufacturing our raw material into these. We may do well to remember that Melancthon was an

* D. Webster's Letter. † Upham, p. 219. ‡ Ibid, p. 221.

interpreter of dreams, that Luther himself fought the Devil as well as the Pope, that Kepler was among the Rosicrucians, and Tycho Brahé was the Prince of Astrologers; that Bishop Jewell, the courtly preacher, prayed to God that the Virgin Queen might not be bewitched; and time would fail us to go over the list of the wise, the great and good who have had belief. A few clear-sighted, calm-sighted men, in all times, have kept their first estate, have sought and found the "open secret," and listened only to the still small voice of God in their own hearts; let us honor, reverence, look up to those holy ones, but let us not dishonor, needlessly, the others. Many things are written down and retained in the memory of men, but many more are only entered in the great book of eternity, there to be forever read by the eye of God himself. In searching our scattered annals from time to time, such incidents as these become visible to us, and significant too—viz.:

The poor wretch, Mary Oliver, in the year 1650, confessed that she was a witch.* Was she weary of life—badgered to her own destruction? However her confession was gotten, it was a good enough confession for those who then believed her. Margaret Jones had been executed at Charlestown.† A woman also at Dorchester, and one at Cambridge. Widow Hibbins was hanged, also, for witchcraft in Boston, in 1655. Ann Cole accused a woman in Hartford, who *confessed* to having had

* See Hutchinson, vol. ii. p. 16.

† Johnson, vol. i. p. 150, cited in Hutchinson.

an amour with Satan: she was executed of course. In 1671, Elizabeth Knap, "and her Ventriloquia" (so Hutchinson calls her),* alarmed the people of Groton, but as she accused the minister and others of good name and fame, *she* was not believed, and *they* were not hanged. But let not the reader grow weary.

"And had we not authority and example for these things?" Well might Magnalia and others ask. Our own most gracious and learned Majesty, James VI. of Scotland and I. of England, had with his own royal hand written his Demonology, and by his own royal will published the same in Edinburgh, in 1597, in England in 1603; and had demolished, so he thought, that scoffer and unbeliever, Reginald Scott, who wrote and printed a book, (A.D. 1584), called Discoveries of Witchcraft, "in behalf (so he says) of the poor, the aged, and the simple." It was well enough known, at least believed, that there were witches, and "Perkins and Bernard"† had given judicious rules whereby one might find them: and Matthew Hopkins, Witchfinder to his Majesty, had found many in England, according to those rules,‡ assisted as he was, by judicious Mr. Calamy, and encouraged by Saint's Rest Baxter. It was well enough known, too, that "old, bilious persons are those most frequently supposed to have the evil eye: the nervous juice in them being depraved and irritated by a vicious

* Vol. ii. p. 17.

† See Ministers' letter in Hutchinson, vol. ii. p. 51.

‡ See Scott's Demonology and Witchcraft.

habitude of body, and so rendered more penetrating and malignant. And young persons, chiefly children and girls, are most affected by it; because their pores are patent, their juices incoherent, and their fibers delicate and susceptible."* No one will regret that this has been so written, if it only guards persons against that bilious habit of body—but how if it should make us cruel and hateful toward such?

Let the reader enter the mystic region with his loins girt, and his lights burning. We approach the matter in hand, for in the year 1688, began a more alarming instance than any which had preceded it. The children of "John Goodwin, a grave man, and a good liver at the north part of Boston, were believed to be bewitched."† They fell down dead at sight of the Assemblies' Catechism, Cotton's Milk for Babes, and some other good works. But, and here shines out the demoniac spirit—"they could read well enough in Oxford jest books, popish books, and even in the English book of Common Prayer," much to the scandal of the rigidly righteous; and of Magnalia Mather, in especial, who took the eldest to his house, and exercised his very best discourse upon her with small effect. Somebody must have had an agency in this work—and looking about, we learn,‡ that the eldest girl had charged a washing woman with theft, and for it had received "harsh language." Could *she*—the Irishwoman—have done this? Charged with it, she

* Rees' Ency. art. *Witchcraft.*

† Hutchinson, vol. ii. p. 18.

‡ Ibid. vol. ii. p. 19.

did not admit nor deny, but seemed to have a disordered mind; however, as the physicians reported her "compos mentis," she was at once hanged, as a proper precaution. Readers will be pleased to learn that these strange children lived to adult age, "never made any confession of fraud," did make "profession of religion," and said that the witch mischiefs had been "one motive for doing the latter." They were saved, and only one old Irish woman was hanged—four for one might be estimated as a good yield. Hutchinson tells, in a note, that in the year 1697, seven were done to death in Scotland, upon the testimony of one girl eleven years old—seven to one in this case. It was not only in *New* England, that these things were done. Glanville had published his witch stories in England, Perkins and others also; Sir Matthew Hale had ranked himself among the witch destroyers. All these books, Hutchinson says, were in New England, "and the behavior of the children is so exact as to leave no room to doubt the stories had been read by the New England persons, or had been told to them." We may lose ourselves in speculation here, and wonder whether Hutchinson, some time lieutenant-governor of the province, and a good man, would have us infer that there was by *Imitation*, or any *other* means a way of explaining these strange things. This of the Goodwin children was only a premonition, the morning star which ushered in a fuller day; for it was in Salem—Salem was the seat of further diableries, which are recounted at large by Mather, by Ca-

lef, and Hutchinson—which will be lightly touched now.

Not only had Satan chosen this eastern end of the old Colony of Massachusetts and Salem, but the house of one Parris, a minister, once a merchant and gentleman and unsuccessful at that,* as the stage upon which to act or have acted this tragi-comedy of witchcraft. 'Tis certain that the Reverend Parris had been troubled about a grant of land which he had obtained from the town, and that divisions between the inhabitants themselves, and the inhabitants and the minister grew out of this business of the "Rights of Property," which few people are willing to admit is encumbered by any duties whatever. This may to some minds suggest thoughts respecting the after doings. But let us look steadily, and we shall, in the month of February, 1691–2, see strange doings in the house of the Reverend Parris. Two young children (young enough, aged ten and eleven years, and both girls) and two other girls in the neighborhood† were strangely beset (as were the Goodwin children shortly before), "getting into holes, creeping under chairs," "to use sundry odd postures, and antic gestures—uttering foolish, ridiculous speeches which neither they nor any others could make sense of," &c. Any thing insignificant becomes significant when Satan is unchained—it is caught up and buzzed about. The women of this quiet village are painfully alive to the dreadful news, and go from house to house: few sleep soundly, for none

* Calef, p. 195. † Hutchinson, vol. ii. p. 25.

can know what is yet to happen. Even the physicians are powerless against this dire distress; in their extremity they say something—"they are bewitched," or what not.* And by whom? Who can tell? Fear hovers over the town, and contagion spreads.

Poor children! they were "disturbed, convulsed," pinched black and blue—stuck with pins—attacked with invisible spindles (one of which became *visible* when seized by the afflicted): they were drugged with invisible poisons—had their mouths stuffed with invisible rags, marked with invisible hot irons, which however showed visible marks—bitten, wounded when the *specter* was struck at,† and indeed could not be said to have had a good time at all. In a word, says Magnalia, "the afflicted in a few days' time arrived to such a refining alteration about their eyes that they could see—a devil, of a little stature and a tawny color, &c., who tendered them a book requiring some signature, or touch; if they refused, the specters under the command of the 'black man,' tortured them with prodigious manifestations." Some confusion exists, whether the devil were Indian color or negro color—sometimes we think it one, sometimes the other. Nothing in this world is *sure*. At last we get at something which the indefatigable Magnalia thus records with italics, capitals, and so on: read,—

"A Malefactor, executed more than forty years

* Calef, p. 196; Hutchinson, vol. ii. p. 25.

† Neale, vol. ii. p. 126; C. Mather, W. of I. W.

ago in this place, did then give Notice of an Horrible PLOT against the country by WITCHCRAFT, and a foundation of WITCHCRAFT then laid, which if it were not seasonably discovered, would probably blow up and pull down all the Churches in the Country."* And now this is upon us, for, says the Doctor Mather (p. 15), "In these hellish meetings, these monsters have associated themselves to do no less a thing than *to destroy the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ in these parts of the World!*" that is, in the beforesaid eastern end of the Old Colony. And "now the *Ty-dogs* of the Pit are abroad among us" (p. 18), "and the *Fire-brands* of *Hell* itself are used for the scorching of us,"—"and that *New England* should this way be harassed,—and not by *swarthy Indians* but they are *sooty devils*" (p. 18), and the Rev. Magnalia says further that which curdles the blood in our arteries (p. 33), "That the *unpardonable sin* is most usually committed by professors of the Christian religion falling into witchcraft." Unpardonable enough!

Most alarming and portentous this news seemed to the quiet and godly town, and well might the ministers take the matter in hand, trying "fasting and prayer at the troubled house," and only the youngest child be relieved thereby. Four children, the eldest a girl of thirteen or fourteen, "all remarkable for ingenuity of temper, had been religiously educated, and were thought to be without guile,"—strange to consternation did it seem that

* W. of I. W. p. 93, p. 12.

such children were chosen of all others. Were there not enough wicked ones, and why should those not be taken for these hellish practices? Why, we may ask, for no historian, no Magnalia, no Calef, no Hutchinson, no Scott can tell. "They barked like dogs," so Magnalia records, "purred like cats," said they were struck "with invisible cudgels," "roasted on invisible spits," "had invisible chains clapt upon her," "an unseen rope with a cruel noose about her neck." Was this all? By no means. Visible as well as invisible were the appearances! Picture the pitying, or startled looks of all as they gaze. Magnified now into martyrs, and clothed with importance, these children are so bestead that some in a sly way suggest that "so much pity and compassion" may "confirm them in designs"* *horrible to think of.*

On the 11th of March,† this thing spreading it seems time to get relief somewhere; for man is powerless; indeed, may be said to help rather than hinder it; for who dares to doubt? that man dare not show his face! Fasting and prayer in a small way in "keeping rooms" and elsewhere, may be tried; with what help is at hand, hoping for the best result. But for the good, none comes of it—on the contrary, matters grow worse; now what can be done but to "buckle to," get in our best hands, and make a dead lift out of this cursed slough? Joel commanded, "Blow a trumpet, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly." So it seems on this 11th day of March ('twas in March

* Hutch. vol. ii. p. 25. † Calef, p. 196.

too, that the Rochester spirits showed intelligence), the Rev. Parris has called in ministers the best. Magnalia, we may "guess," was there in shovel hat, and white neckcloth, a man to be depended on, a kind of Hercules who had conquered witches with pen and prayer, who knew, if any body did, what to do. We shall now see who is the strongest, whether the gates of hell shall prevail or no! By heavens! they do prevail, for this even has not the smallest effect; the children were passive till a prayer was ended, and then went on as before; and they "had been well educated and of good behavior!"

It so happened that an Indian woman from New Spain owned by the Rev. Parris, had bethought herself to try *her* hand at righting this business a few days before; had baked her cake and given it to the dog, but so far as could be discovered he did not care a straw. Unhappy Tituba! for when the children heard of this, they cried out upon her dreadfully, and she was fain to confess herself a witch. Here then is something which may well startle any incredulous infidel, should there be such in Salem; none dares to show himself, no further proof is needed of the reality of these things. The private wrestlings have become village fasts,* and anon colony fasts; but with the smallest result. We can not starve the enemy out, but of our emptiness he seems to make mock. John Aubrey, F. R. S. (London, 1721), tells us that

> "Vervain and Dill
> Hinders witches from their will."

* I. Mather in Cases of Conscience.

Also that Hypericon under the pillow is sure to do it. We have no reason to believe that these were tried at Salem, and can but regret it, for through ignorance of these cures they were obliged to resort to graver ones.

Sarah Osborn, a "melancholy distract old woman," is cried out upon; "Sarah Good, an old woman who was bed-rid,"* church-members Cory and Nurse also; and at last the wife of Thomas Putnam joins the children and "makes most terrible shrieks" against Nurse: though the old women deny it, what does it avail? On the 3d April, Parris† preached long and strong from the text, "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" "Sit still, Sarah Cloyse, sht! sht!" but Sarah Cloyse, sister of Nurse, would not sit, and "went out of meeting,"—a foolish thing enough, for *she* then was "cried out" upon and committed for a witch.

These things were done, yet the round world rolled on; softly the snow fell in those early March days, and slowly it melted away enriching the rugged earth; as before the sun "crossed the line," crept up toward his summer solstice, burst the prison of the violet and the blood-root, and waked into life the toad and the turtle; God—what men call God—works in his way; the tides do ebb and flow, the stars are held in their courses; the grass springs. That the Devil too works is evident enough, for he is among us; but we in Salem, unfortunate that we are, what do we? it's true

* Hutchinson, vol. ii. p. 26. † Ibid. vol. ii. p. 26.

Justice Hawthorn, Justice Curwin are busy enough, with Marshal George Herrick, getting the witches into jail, but what to do with them? 'tis a fearful question!

'Tis a question that arises every day of man's life; what is one's duty under the peculiar circumstances? Man is so hedged about by influences, and nowhere any *sure* guide, now that the Holy Roman Church, with her "spiritual guides" and other machinery has, by a pleasant road enough, led us right into the bog and slough of spiritual despotism and death, where living men do not wish to lie. We must get what counsel we can, and use such spiritual guides as we have; guides can not, alas! secure infallibility even if gathered together in council like to their Roman prototypes,—with the same amount of discussing and jangling, having the same kind of heads seething on their shoulders, the same hearts beating under their ribs, the same yearning too for power, and extreme desire that Religion may be helped, and through them, her chosen ministers—for how else can it be done? In the case of the Goodwin children, some were busy, and four persons were plucked, as we may hope, from the burning, with the sacrifice of but one; and now if this too can be made to redound to the glory of God in some way, and especially to his meeting-houses in the old Colony, the Ministers (though not Priests), will deserve credit.

Something must be done, for the thing increases and the jails are full; Parris is busy, "Magnalia"

is busy, with pen, prayer, and pulpit, at home and abroad, in season and out of season. Magnalia Mather especially will not give it up, for he says, "About this Devil there are many things whereof we may reasonably and profitably be inquisitive," and inquisitive he surely is; with an untiring industry he hunts high and low, once making a blow just in the nick of time, for he assures us in his "Memorable Providences," "There was one singular passion that frequently attended her; an invisible chain would be clapt about her and she in much pain, &c. Once *I* did with my own hand knock it off as it began to be fastened about her." Wonderful Magnalia! Indeed he has told us, and we ought to be sufficiently thankful,* "I have indeed set myself to countermine the whole PLOT of the Devil in every branch of it," and all can cry, God-speed.

Things have progressed now from February till June, and only Bridget Bishop was then brought to trial; for the new Charter was expected every day, and it would be well to wait for that. Bridget had been charged with witchcraft twenty years before, and of her none now need doubt; in all that time had there not been losses among the neighbors, of cattle, poultry—had not carts been upset, death-ticks heard in bed-rooms, black cats seen prowling about, and white figures moving across the gardens, or a suspicion of such? of something white, at least? And no horse-shoe nailed against the well-sweep, or over the cellar-door, would alto-

* W. of I. W. Preface.

gether assure us of safety? None will regret her. She was hanged on the 10th of June,* and so one thing was done; hurriedly, as was natural, the people not being yet used to it. 'Tis true, her accuser confessed on his death-bed his guilt; but who knows whether he did not lie? At any rate it was useless then to think about it; and Bridget was old, and was as well dead as alive—let her go.

Every thing should be done decently and in order, and it was determined to get a report from the ministers upon the dreadful state of things then existing. So, on the 15th of June, 1692, it was received, written after mature deliberation (was it done by Magnalia?) and read with sincerity. It alluded,—

1. To our afflicted state.

2. To God and the Governor.

3. To a "critical and exquisite caution, lest Satan get an advantage over us."

4. To persons whose characters are unblemished.

5. To proper inquiry—and commends Perkins and Barnard's directions.

6. To the fact "that it is an undoubted and notorious thing that a demon may, by God's permission, appear even to ill purposes, in the shape of an innocent, yea, and a virtuous man."

7. (In full,) "We know not whether some remarkable affronts given the devils by our disbelieving those testimonies whose whole force and strength is from them alone, may not put a period unto the

* Hutchinson, vol. ii. p. 48.

progress of the dreadful calamity begun upon us, in the accusation of so many persons, whereof some we hope are clear from the great transgression laid to their charge."

8. "NEVERTHELESS, we can not but humbly recommend unto the government, the speedy and vigorous prosecutions of such as have rendered themselves obnoxious, according to the directions given in the law of God, and the wholesome statutes of the English nation for the detection of witchcrafts."

To which all cry Amen—God-speed—only let us *be* certain that we know what are the laws of *God*, and what the *wholesome* statutes. We are somewhat puzzled—when we reflect that, as above stated, these demons are *permitted by God*—as to what our especial business in meddling with them may be. Perhaps, however, men could not then reflect, for fear is frantic. Hutchinson has not preserved the names of the signers of this advice, but we are inclined to believe, nay to hope, that Samuel Willard, one of the ministers in Boston, did not place his name at the foot of it. But "Magnalia" is none of those who stand "shilly-shally!" Whoever doubts he does not, but will do and dare, and dare and do till the chosen land and chosen people of God, are purged from this uncleanness. The new bench of Judges, Lieutenant-governor Stoughton (spelled Stroughton in W. of I. W.), Major Saltonstall, Major Richards, Major Gidney, Mr. Wait Winthrop, Captain Sewall, and Mr. Sargeant, are then fully sworn, and ready to meet any

demon, whether it be the Rev. Burroughs, or Satan himself, hidden under the old clothes of Goody Good. They go right along with their work now, and on the 30th of June "five women were brought upon trial, Sarah Good, Rebeka Nurse, Susannah Martin, Elizabeth How, and Sarah Wilder."*

There is no difficulty about any but Nurse. As she was a church-member, and of good character, the jury thought fit to acquit her; upon which such a clamor ensued among the afflicted witnesses, and such a dissatisfaction was expressed by the Court,† and indeed by the popular voice, the jury are glad to get back again to their jury-room, and see what could be done; for one does not desire to be sniffed at by one's neighbors; and moreover "who knows but that these witnesses, with their damnable witchcrafts, might cry out upon us?" Clearly, safety requires a reconsideration; and the "market" demands a different verdict; so "then they brought her in guilty!" The Rev. Noyes, minister of Salem, at once excommunicated her, "delivered her to Satan" in due form—and thus an end was made to these five. At the execution, the Rev. Noyes told Susannah Martin that he knew she was a witch, and she had better own it—but she would not, and said rather that "he lied," and that she was no more a witch than he was a wizard: and if he took away her life, God would give him blood to drink. We are not certain that God did; at any rate that

* Hutchinson, vol. ii. p. 25; also, Wonders of I. World.

† Hutchinson, vol. ii. p. 25.

tradition exists, and has been greatly improved to our profit.*

While these dire experiences were going forward, the occasion was made use of to open the eyes of irreligious persons to the dreadful dangers to which they were liable; and we can not wonder that many enrolled themselves under the spiritual leaders, and thus insured to that extent, both their temporal and spiritual security. And why not? we may well ask. Should not every manifestation of the enemy be made use of to arouse to watchfulness? Is there any danger in crying Wolf! wolf! We shall see.

Though we walk and work on this thin crust of earth, overlying molten lava,† though Hell itself gape wide its jaws, we pass along in one daily round, eating, drinking, hoping, regretting; and all through this dreary summer of 1692 the business of one's small life never ceased. The sea yielded its food, and the earth yielded its harvest, which were laid up in the hot and sultry weather, that men might exist through the cold and rugged winter; and just the same as if there were no Devil at all, and none then loose in Salem! But let none suppose the dread sense of these things did not press upon the hearts of wise and simple, wicked and holy—for where and when shall come the end? That it is not yet is certain, for on the 5th day of August, a new batch is hauled before the Court: George Burroughs, John Proctor and

* Read The House of the Seven Gables.

† See Alex. Fisher Olmstead's Chemistry, p. 46.

Elizabeth his wife, John Willard, George Jacobs, and Matthew Carrier.

A serious matter, truly, this is getting to be; for George Burroughs is a minister of God—has been such in Salem and elsewhere, some ten years and more—had had difficulties years before when settled in Salem, as who had not?—but was on the whole "a man of unimpeachable character."* What ailed him then, that he should thus be set upon? It is not clear. Was he tinctured with the Roger Williams heresies? Had he spoken against these doings unadvisedly? Indeed could he have declared that there were no witches, and that none had ever been? Which of course led on to the conclusion that Magnalia and all were either knaves or fools. At last, however, he is in the toils, and he shall know more about these things.

John Willard, too, is here the constable or sheriff; he who, through willful obstinacy, or tender heartedness, after bringing in several of these sinning witches had refused to bring up some for whom he had too much regard; he too shall know what disobedience leads too. Old Jacobs, also, accused by his own grand-daughter, Margaret Jacobs, will find that the end of life may be as hard as the beginning.

Can we do better than to listen for a short time to the account of this thing from the venerable Magnalia.† "Glad should I have been, if I had never known the name of this man, this George

* Allen's Biog. Dict. † Wonders of I. W. pp. 33 to 39.

Burroughs—or never had this occasion to mention so much as the first letters of his name.

"1. This G. B. was indicted for witchcraft. He was accused by eight of the confessing witches, as being the head actor at some of their hellish rendezvous, and who had the promise of being a king in Satan's kingdom now going to be erected: he was accused by nine persons for extraordinary lifting and such feats of strength as could not be done without a diabolical assistance; and for other such things he was accused, until about thirty testimonies were brought in against him; nor were these judged the half of what might have been considered for his conviction; however, they were enough to fix the character of a witch upon him, according to the rules of reasoning by the judicious Gaule in that case directed.

"2. The court being sensible that the testimonies of the parties bewitched used to have room among the suspicious or presumptuous, brought in against one indicted for witchcraft, there were now heard the testimonies of several persons who were most notoriously bewitched, and every day tortured by invisible hands, and these now all charged the specters of G. B. to have a share in their torments. At the examination of this G. B. the bewitched people were grievously harassed with preternatural mischiefs, which could not possibly [?] be dissembled; and they still ascribed unto the endeavors of G. B. to kill them. And now upon his trial one of the bewitched persons testified, that in her agonies a little black-haired man came to her saying

his name was B. and bidding her set her hand to a book which he showed unto her, and bragging that he was a conjurer above the ordinary rank of witches; that he often persecuted her with the offer of that book, saying she should be well and need fear nobody, if she would but sign it, but he inflicted cruel pains and hurts upon her because of her denying to do so. The testimonies of the other sufferers concurred with these; and it was remarkable that whereas biting was one of the ways which the witches used for the vexing of sufferers, when they cried out of G. B. biting them, the print of his teeth would be seen on the flesh of the complainers, and just such a set of teeth as G. B.'s would then appear on them, which could be distinguished from those of some other men's.

"Others of them testified, that in their torments G. B. tempted them to go into a sacrament, unto which they perceived him with a sound of a trumpet summoning other witches, who quickly after the sound would come from all quarters unto the rendezvous. One of them falling into a kind of trance, affirms afterward that G. B. had carried her into a very high mountain, where he showed her mighty and glorious kingdoms, and said he would give them all to her if she would write in his book, but she told him they were none of his to give, and refused the motion, enduring much misery for the refusal.

"It cost the court a wonderful deal of trouble to hear the testimonies of the sufferers. For when they were going to give in their depositions, they

would for a long time be taken with fits, that made them incapable of saying any thing. The Chief Judge asked the prisoner who he thought hindered these witnesses from giving their testimonies, and he answered he supposed it was the Devil. That honorable person then replied, How comes the Devil to be so loth to hear any testimony borne against you? which cast him into very great confusion.

"3. It hath been a frequent thing for the bewitched people to be entertained with apparitions of ghosts of murdered people, at the same time that the specters of the witches troubled them. These ghosts do always affright the beholders, more than all the other spectral representations; and when they exhibit themselves, they cry out of being murdered by the witchcrafts or other violences of the persons who are then in specter present. It is further considered that once or twice these apparitions have been seen by others, at the very same time they have shown themselves to the bewitched, and seldom have there been these apparitions, but when something unusual and suspected hath attended the death of the party thus appearing. Some that have been accused by these apparitions, accosting the bewitched people, who had never heard a word of any such persons ever being in the world, have upon a fair examination, freely and fully confessed the murder of those very persons, although these also did not know how the apparitions had complained of them. Accordingly several of the bewitched had given in their testi-

mony, that they had been troubled with the apparitions of two women, who said they were G. B.'s two wives, and that he had been the death of them, and that the magistrates must be told of it, before whom, if G. B. upon his trial denied it, they did not know but that they should appear again in the court. Now G. B. had been infamous for the barbarous usage of his two successive wives, all the country over. Moreover it was testified, the specter of G. B. threatening the sufferers told them he had killed (beside others) Mrs. Lawson and her daughter Ann. And it was noted that these were the virtuous wife and daughter of one at whom this G. B. might have a prejudice for being serviceable at Salem village, from whence himself had in ill terms removed some years before; and that when they died, which was long since, there were some odd circumstances about them, which made some of the attendants there suspect witchcraft, though none imagined from what quarter it should come.

"Well, G. B. being now upon his trial, one of the bewitched persons was cast into horror at the ghosts of B.'s two deceased wives, then appearing before him, and crying for vengeance against him. Hereupon several of the bewitched persons were successively called in, who all not knowing what the former had seen and said, concurred in their horror of the apparition, which they affirmed that he had before him. But he, though much appalled, utterly denied that he discerned any thing of it, nor was it any part of his conviction.

"4. Judicious writers have assigned it a great place in the conviction of witches, when persons are impeached by other notorious witches to be as ill as themselves, especially if the persons have been much noted for neglecting the worship of God. Now as there might have been testimonies enough of G. B.'s antipathy to prayer, and the other ordinances of God, though by his profession, singularly obliged thereunto; so there now came in against the prisoner, the testimonies of several persons, who confessed their own having been horrible witches, and ever since their confessions had been themselves terribly tortured by the devils and other witches, even like the other sufferers, and therein undergone the pains of many deaths for their confessions.

"These now testified that G. B. had been at witch meetings with them; and that he was the person who had seduced and compelled them into the snares of witchcraft, that he promised them fine clothes for doing it; that he brought them poppets and thorns to stick into those poppets, for the afflicting of other people; and that he exhorted them with the rest of the crew to bewitch all Salem village; but be sure to do it gradually, if they would prevail in what they did.

"When the Lancashire witches were condemned I do not remember that there was any considerable further evidence than that of the bewitched, and than that of some that had confessed; we see so much already against G. B. But this being indeed

not enough, there were other things to render what had already been produced credible.

"5. A famous divine recites this among the convictions of a witch, the testimony of the party bewitched whether pining or dying, together with the joint oaths of sufficient persons that have seen certain prodigious pranks or feats wrought by the party accused. Now God [?] had been pleased so to leave G. B., that he had ensnared himself by several instances which he had formerly given, of a preternatural strength, and which were now produced against him. He was a very puny man, yet he had often done things beyond the strength of a giant. A gun of about seven feet barrel, and so heavy that strong men could not steadily hold it out, with both hands: there were several testimonies given in by persons of credit and honor, that he made nothing of taking up such a gun behind the lock with but one hand, and holding it out like a pistol at arm's length. G. B. in his vindication was so foolish as to say that an Indian was there and held it out, at the same time; whereas none of the spectators saw any such Indian; but they supposed the black man (as the witches call the Devil, and they generally say he resembles an Indian) might give him that assistance. There was evidence brought in, that he made nothing of taking up whole barrels filled with molasses or cider in very disadvantageous postures, and carrying them off, through the most difficult places, out of a canoe to the shore.

"Yea, there were two testimonies that G. B., with

only putting the forefinger of his right hand into the muzzle of an heavy gun, a fowling-piece, of about six or seven feet barrel, lifted the gun, and held it out at arm's end; a gun which the deponents, though strong men, could not with both hands lift up, and hold out at the butt end, as is usual. Indeed one of the witnesses was overpersuaded by some persons to be out of the way upon G. B.'s trial, but he came afterward with sorrow for his withdrawing, and gave in his testimony. Nor were either of these witnesses made use of as evidence in the trial.

"6. Then came in several testimonies relating to the domestic affairs of G. B., which had a very hard aspect upon him; and not only proved him a very ill man, but also confirmed the belief of the character which had already been fastened upon him. 'Twas testified that keeping his two successive wives in a strange kind of slavery, he would, when he came home from abroad, pretend to tell the talk which any had with them: that he has brought them to the point of death by his harsh dealings with his wives, and then made the people about him promise that in case death should happen they would say nothing of it; that he used all means to make his wives write, sign, seal, and swear, a covenant never to reveal any of his secrets; that his wives had privately complained unto the neighbors about frightly apparitions of evil spirits, with which their house was sometimes infested; and that many such things had been whispered among the neighborhood. There were also some other testi-

monies relating to the death of people, whereby the consciences of an impartial jury were convinced that G. B. had bewitched the persons mentioned in the complaints. But I am forced to omit several such passages in this as well as all the succeeding trials, because the scribes who took notice of them have not supplied me.

"7. One Mr. Ruck, brother-in-law to this G. B., testified that G. B. and he himself and his sister who was G. B.'s wife going out for two or three miles to gather strawberries, Ruck with his sister, the wife of G. B. rode home very softly, with G. B. on foot in their company; G. B. stepped aside a little into the bushes, whereupon they halted and halloed for him; he not answering, they went away homewards, with a quickened pace, without any expectation of seeing him in a considerable while; and yet when they were got near home, to their astonishment they found him on foot with them, having a basket of strawberries. G. B. immediately fell to chiding his wife on account of what she had been speaking to her brother of him on the road: which when they wondered at, he said he knew their thoughts. Ruck being startled at that, made some reply, intimating that the Devil did not know so far: but G. B. answered, my God makes known your thoughts unto me. The prisoner now at the bar had nothing to answer to what was thus witnessed against him that was worth considering: only he said Ruck and his wife left a man with him when they left him; which Ruck now affirmed to be false, and when the court asked

G. B. what the man's name was his countenance was much altered, nor could he say who it was. But the court began to think that he then stepped aside, only that by the assistance of the black man he might put on his invisibility, and in that fascinating mist gratify his own jealous humor to hear what they said of him—which trick of rendering themselves invisible our witches do in their confessions pretend that they sometimes are masters of; and it is the more credible, because there is demonstration that they often render many other things utterly invisible.

"8. Faltering, faulty, unconstant and contrary answers, upon judicial and deliberate examination, are counted some unlucky symptoms of guilt in all crimes, especially in witchcrafts. Now there never was a prisoner more eminent for these than G. B. both at his examination and on his trial. His tergiversations, contradictions and falsehoods were very sensible; he had little to say, but that he had heard some things that he could not prove reflecting upon the character of some of the witnesses; only he gave in a paper to the jury, wherein, although he had many times before granted not only that there are witches but also that the present sufferings of the country, are the effects of horrible witchcrafts, yet he now goes to evince it that there neither are, nor ever were witches, that having made a compact with the devil, can send a devil to torment other people at a distance. This paper was transcribed out of Ady—which the court presently knew as soon as they heard it. But he said

he had taken none of it out of any book; for which his evasion afterwards was, that a gentleman gave him the discourse in a manuscript, from whence he had transcribed it.

"9. The jury brought him in guilty; but when he came to die, he utterly denied the fact, whereof he had been thus convicted."

O, long-winded Mather! let us thank thee and heaven that we are through this sad story thus told; and let us thank heaven that once in history we have knowledge of a man with the largest belief, and the toughest digestion—"Cotton Mather" —special pleader, some may call him; with a thing called conscience all twisted into corkscrews, by the long medication of inexorable metaphysics. To Mather it must have been that the man told a story of carrying a large nail in his eye for a week—whose slight doubt was at once removed, when from his pocket the sufferer produced the identical nail!

But, alas! G. B., once our minister, one of God's elect, as we believed, to turn out so! Alas! alas! that he should lift barrels of cider, and in impossible places—play tricks upon his wives—joke, and be all the while in league with Satan!—bewitch people, and work their deaths for aught we know —for, are they not dead? And, now we think over this matter, there were death-ticks or other mysterious things we could not explain—and there have been various other things unexplained, for all nature is full of wonders, and may not this G. B. have had a hand in them "by God's permission"?

Who knows! he may have had all creation under his thumb, and have hired his devilish witches to stick pins into poppets, to plague her and us. But to think that he might (had he been permitted!) when our pastor, have led us straight off to hell, and we never have known it till it was too late. His pranks with guns, these exceed belief—and with such long guns. Does any one whisper that they have proven too much—that a gun, which ordinarily "strong men could not lift with both hands," would not be very serviceable—that G. B. might himself have stuck his pins into his poppets quietly, and not thus have exposed himself to detection? Does any ungodly person say that he was scared at his trial, and borne down by the strong waters of fear and fanaticism, so that he could not make a defense? or, do they say that he, seeing that *any* defense would avail naught with such judges and such juries, made none? Have we not evidence enough that he had a fair trial—and that all was taken down by scribes competent to do so? By one Rev. Samuel Parris in especial,* in "whose house these diableries broke out?" Let those who murmur look to it, or it may be the worse for them.

And Martha Carrier, too, who is she? a townswoman, truly; but Dr. Magnalia knows too well what she is, for he says,† "This *rampant hag*, Martha Carrier, was the person of whom the confessions of the witches, and of her own children among the rest, agreed that the devil had promised her she should be queen of hell!" Her own chil-

* Hutch. vol. ii. pp. 30, 47. † W. of I. W. p. 56.

dren! What could she have been but a witch of the damnedest dye? Here is the confession of a poor child, Sarah Carrier, aged *seven* years—proof enough!*

Sarah Carrier's confession, August 11th, 1696: "It was asked Sarah Carrier by the magistrates or justices, John Hawthorne, Esq., and others—How long hast thou been a witch? A. Ever since I was six years old. Q. How old are you now? A. Near eight years old—my brother Richard says I shall be eight years old in November next. Q. Who made you a witch? A. My mother; she made me set my hand to a book. Q. How did you set your hand to it? A. I touched it with my fingers, and the book was red, and the paper of it was white. She said she never had seen the black man; the place where she did it was in Andrew Foster's pasture, and Elizabeth Johnson, jr., was there. Being asked who was there beside; she answered, her aunt Toothaker and her cousin. Being asked when it was, she said when she was baptized. Q. What did they promise to give you? A. A black dog. Q. Did the dog ever come to you? A. No. Q. But you said you saw a cat once—what did it say to you? A. It said it would tear me in pieces if I would not set my hand to the book. She said her mother baptized her, and the devil or black man was not there, as she saw; and her mother said, when she baptized her, thou art mine forever and ever. Amen. Q. How did you afflict folks? A. I pinched them; and she said

* Hutchinson, vol. ii. p. 44.

she had no poppets, but went to them she afflicted. Being asked whether she went in her body or in her spirit, she said in her spirit. She said her mother carried her thither to afflict. Q. How did your mother carry you when she was in prison? A. She came like a black cat. Q. How did you know that it was your mother? A. The cat told me so, that she was my mother. She said she afflicted Phelps' child last Saturday, and Elizabeth Johnson joined with her to do it. She had a wooden spear, about as long as her finger, of Elizabeth Johnson, and she had it of the devil. She would not own that she had ever been at witch meeting at the village. This is the substance—attest, Simon Willard."

Old George Jacobs, too, of Salem—he shall hear the words of his grand-daughter against him; he and Rev. Burroughs—fathers against children, and children against fathers. Willard could get no farther away, though he fled, than Nashaway, 40 miles from this dreadful Salem;* the hue-and-cry suddenly fell upon him there, and suddenly carried him away to inevitable shame and death.

Proctor and his wife, too—we know from the best of evidence, as the Rev. Mather earnestly insists that they *are* witches—they may deny, for witches can lie too. Proctor may address as many appeals from prison as he chooses—he may say (but who will believe him), "Here are five persons who have lately confessed themselves to be witches, and do accuse some of us of being along with them at a

* Calef, p. 223.

sacrament since we were committed into close prison, which we know to be lies. Two of the five are (Carrier's sons) young men, who would not confess any thing till they tied them neck and heels, till the blood was ready to come out of their noses."* Proctor may write what he likes—may plead on the scaffold that he is not ready to die—may ask the prayers of the Rev. Noyes—he shall have nothing unless he will confess that he is a witch. "Deny, and be hanged; or confess, and be damned" —truly, the alternative seems hard. Proctor's wife may be saved for a time, because she was with child—an unnecessary tender-heartedness, as some thought; why not crush the whole spawn, and be done with them?

And what should happen the very day before the execution, when all was settled—what, except that this Margaret Jacobs—who had been so useful in the conviction of old Jacobs and Burroughs—should come to Burroughs, and ask his pardon, and confess that she was a wicked liar and coward, and that she it was who deserved death, which she may yet get:—and not only so, but she must write a letter to the Court, and endeavor to unsettle what was already done! She said in it,† she being then in jail, "The Lord above knows, I knew nothing in the least measure how or who afflicted them (the bewitched): they told me without doubt I did, or else they would not fall down at me; they told me, if I would not confess, I should be put down into the dungeon, and would

* Calef, p. 225. † Hutchinson, vol. ii. p. 39.

be hanged; but if I would confess I should have my life: the which did so affright me with my own vile wicked heart, to save my life, made me make the like confession I did, which confession, may it please the honored Court, is altogether false and untrue. . . . . What I said was altogether false against my grandfather and Mr. Burroughs, which I did to save my life, and to have my liberty," &c. It is too late! *Weakness*, Margaret, is sometimes as hateful as wickedness.

A dull sense of misery and fear pervades the once quiet town, and we would say that on this 19th day of August, 1692 (the trials began on the 5th), the sun did not shine with a holy light; all the country is astir—for George Burroughs, John Proctor, John Willard, George Jacobs sr., and Martha Carrier are to be led out to die on Gallows' hill. Fear sits on all faces; pity on some; grim duty, too—and, is it possible? grim satisfaction at thus carrying things with a high hand right in the teeth of Satan himself. "Mr. Burroughs was carried in a cart with the others through the streets of Salem to execution. When he was upon the ladder, he made a speech for the clearing of his innocency with such solemn and serious expressions, as were to the admiration of all present; his prayer (which he concluded by repeating the Lord's Prayer) was so well worded, and uttered with such composedness, and such (at least seeming) fervency of spirit as was very affecting, and drew tears from many, so that it seemed to some that the spectators would hinder the execution. The accusers said

the black man stood and dictated to him." As soon as he was turned off, Mr. Cotton Mather, being mounted upon a horse, addressed himself to the people, partly to declare that he (Burroughs) was no ordained minister, and partly to possess the people of his guilt, saying that the Devil has often been transformed into an angel of light; and this somewhat appeased the people, so the executions went on. "When he was cut down, he was dragged by the halter to a hole or grave between the rocks, about two feet deep; his shirt and breeches being pulled off, and an old pair of trowsers of one executed put on his lower parts; he was so put in, together with Willard and Carrier, that one of his hands and his chin, and a foot of one of them, were left uncovered."* So much for their bodies—for their souls, who knows? There *is* a God above, though some may now deny.

Much might have been said about "indecent haste," unjustifiable cruelty, and insufficient proof. But could they not reply, that "what *must* be done, had better be done quickly;" that there is no such thing as cruelty toward a witch; and that the proofs were so many and overwhelming, that the ancient adage of "Swear not at all," had grown into quite another shape, and now was "Swear to any thing—but SWEAR!" Have they not proof enough—proof upon proof—in the case of poor Margaret Rule—so that, as our Mather says, "I believe scarce any but people of a particular dirtiness will harbor such an uncharitable censure," as

* Calef, p. 223; Hutch. vol. ii. p. 57; Neale, vol. ii. p. 144.

to suppose her fits could have been imposture. 'Tis true, that it came out, in one of her examinations, that she did not eat any thing, and drank only rum.* But what of that? a poor sufferer, under such a sore affliction, would do almost any thing to get comfort. But in her case it was proven by testimony, that these devils could destroy gravitation, for "once her tormentors pulled her up to the ceiling of the chamber, and held her there before a numerous company of spectators, who found it as much as they could do to pull her down again," so Mather says. And Bridget Bishop, too, had played all sorts of impossible pranks—such as getting back money which she had paid, out of people's strong boxes as well as their pockets. Had she not set William Stacey's wagon in a hole, so that he had great ado to lift it out, and yet, when he looked, lo! there was no hole? had not his gears all flown to pieces, one night—and his bag of corn grown so heavy, that he could not lift it—all at once? And Joseph Ring, too, had he not "been strangely carried about by demons from one witch meeting to another for near two years together; and for one quarter of this time they made him and kept him dumb?" Mather believed that he believed so, and so he said afterward in his Wonders of the Invisible World—and he a scholar and a clergyman, too!

But all go home after these hangings with heavy hearts, for what shall happen next none can tell. Witches multiply (such as say "frankly" that they

* Calef, p. 46.

are witches) and the afflicted multiply, and the accused are cast into prison at a fearful rate. It will not do now to falter—the work must be finished, disagreeable though it may be—for, says the venerable Magnalia,* "by these things we only see what the devils could have power to do, if the great God should give them that power." And a very queer kind of a God, some said, Magnalia made of him; but let that pass.

Sept. 9.—Six more were tried and sentenced to death:—Margaret Cory of Salem village, Mary Easty of Topsfield, Alice Parker, and Ann Pedaker of Salem, Dorcas Hoar of Beverly, and Mary Bradberry of Salisbury. How does the dreadful thing spread into all the country round about! Sept. 17, nine more received sentence of death.† But Giles Cory proved himself most disloyal and disobedient; for he obstinately refused to plead when brought before our honorable court on the hellish charge. The jury had cleared *none* who were tried, and, indeed, the respectable Hutchinson (afterward Lt. Gov.), said, "I meet with but one person in near an hundred, whose examinations are upon file—that was, dismissed after having been once charged.‡

The jury had trouble and delay enough as it was to get this thing under; had they stopped to sift and weigh evidence how much greater might it not have been, and just as likely as not the wrong persons might have been let off. At any rate, as

* Account of Margaret Rule.

† Calef, p. 228; Hutch. vol. ii. p. 58. ‡ Ibid. vol. ii. p. 65.

Giles Cory refused to be tried, there was no way but to let the law take its course; and it was discovered on looking that he might be pressed to death! "He was a bold, stout man,"* but that avail'd naught. So on the 16th Sept. he was got rid of in that way—"the first in New England that ever suffered this kind of death,"† and thank God for it, the last—the Alpha and Omega! But little pity did he get, for "in pressing, his tongue being pressed out of his mouth, the sheriff, with his cane, forced it in again, when he was dying!"‡ So on the 22d, right after this, it was found necessary to rid the country of eight of those already condemned, and they were carted up Gallows' hill—let us see whether any would show pity or sorrow for these. Strange to tell, the cart got set on the hill, and the afflicted did cry out that the Devil hindered it. Mrs. Cory made a fine prayer, and much good might it do *her,* for no one else got much help of it. After execution, the Rev. Noyes, "turning to the bodies said, what a sad thing it is to see eight firebrands of hell hanging there!" Sad, indeed! but are there not sadder things than even that? a question which Noyes may yet have to answer.

Samuel Wardwell was among this last batch; he had before this confessed himself a wizard, and had helped to accuse others; but somehow his conscience pricked him, and he recanted before the magistrates, and would do nothing more. Not such fools were his wife and daughter (also having con-

* Neale, vol. ii. p. 157. † Neale. ‡ Calef, p. 228.

fessed themselves witches), for they accused *him*, and saved *themselves*.*

And how was it that so many confessed themselves witches—especially if they were not? But were they not? that is the question. Life is sweet, and liberty pleasant, and these a confession secured,† and when all is chaos, one must try to get to the top. Every one for himself, and the devil take the hindmost, is no new law of good society. "Why should a confession insure safety?" Oh sagacious questioner, is it nothing that the hands of these holy and reverend men should be strengthened, who had so fought in the war against Satan? for these confessions do somehow render it certain that there is (as they had so long said), a devil—and that he is wise who lets them save him from his devouring jaws. Strange things were going on, too, in secret—works of darkness, which we may well suppose, did never see the light; one instance suffices us.

Six poor women, who had been induced to confess during the danger and delusion, afterward explained the machinery‡ by which they were acted upon. More than fifty inhabitants of their town thus testified as to their character,—"By their sober, godly, and exemplary conversation, they have obtained a good report in the place, where they have been well esteemed, and approved in the church of which they are members." They said thus,—

* Hutchinson, vol. ii. p. 148. † Calef, p. 239.

‡ See Upham, p. 66.

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"And our nearest and dearest relations, seeing us in that dreadful condition, and knowing our great danger, apprehending that there was no other way to save our lives, as the case was then circumstanced, but by our confessing ourselves to be such and such persons as the afflicted represented us to be, they, out of tender love and pity, persuaded us to confess what we did confess. And, indeed, that confession that it is said we made, was no other than what was suggested to us by some gentlemen, they telling us that we were witches, and that they knew it, and they knew that we knew it, which made us think that it was so, and our understanding and our reason, and our faculties almost gone, we were not capable of judging our condition; as also the hard measures they used with us, rendered us incapable of making our defense: but said any thing and every thing which they desired; and most of what we said was in effect but consenting to what they said. Some time after, when better composed, they telling us of what we had confessed, we did profess that we were innocent of such things. Thus we hearing that Samuel Wardwell had renounced his confession, and quickly after was condemned and executed, some of us were told that we were going after Wardwell.

Mary Osgood,	Deliv. Dane,
Sarah Wilson,	Mary Tiler,
Abigail Barker,	Hannah Tiler."

"The first complained of was the Indian woman Tituba—she confessed—but afterward said that her

master (Rev. Parris, whose children first were possessed), did beat and abuse her to make her confess, &c."*

"By these things you may see how the matter was carried on, chiefly by the complaints and accusations of the afflicted (bewitched ones as it was supposed), and then by confessions, &c. Yet experience shows that the more there were apprehended the more were still afflicted by Satan." By Satan! be sure of that.†

The summer sun has now begun to shed upon us its slanting rays, and more darkness envelops the northern worlds; the fateful equinox (the line gale) is past. Sirius has risen and set—the dog-days are over—the round world is not fast, but rolls onward resistlessly through the blue ether, as it ever had—and yet how dreadful and drear is it at the small town of Salem on the bleak coast of Massachusetts Bay! Now on the beginning of October—Indian summer, perhaps stealing over the landscape, it stands thus—nineteen persons have been hanged, and one pressed to death, and eight more condemned, in all twenty-eight, of which above a third part were members of some of the churches in New England, and more than half of them of a good conversation in general, and not one cleared; about fifty having confessed themselves to be witches, of whom not one was executed; above an hundred and fifty in prison, and above two hundred more accused.‡ A bad show, tru-

* Calef, p. 197; Upham Lect. p. 22. † Magnalia, book vi.
‡ Calef, p. 236.

ly, and a cold and trying winter too, just at hand.

But let us overlook nothing concerning this matter; especially any thing which may help us out of our coil hereafter. We note, then, that among those cried out upon, and who there is every reason to suppose were as much witches as any of those hung—were Mrs. Mary Carey of Charlestown, Mr. Edward Bishop, and wife, Mr. Philip English and wife, Mr. Dudley Bradstreet, Justice of the Peace in Andover (and as some said because he refused to commit more after he had committed forty), and his wife—Mr. John Bradstreet, his brother—who had afflicted a dog—and Capt. John Aldin, of Boston.* These all being vehemently accused, and some of them imprisoned, thought good to make their escape, fearing that their last end might not otherwise be peaceful—and so they did escape, some to Rhode Island; but not being safe there, found protection only at New York, and elsewhere. Mrs. Carey's husband was imprisoned, as he had persuaded, and indeed helped his wife to escape, and he complained bitterly of her treatment, and of those others condemned, and indeed says—"They had also trials of cruel mockings, which is the more, considering what a people for religion, I mean the profession of it, we have been;" and says, too, that on his wife's examination, "she desired me to wipe the tears from her eyes, and the sweat from her face, which I did; then she desired she might lean

* Neale's Hist. vol. ii. p. 152.

herself on me, saying she should faint,"* which Justice Hathorn did refuse.

Capt. Aldin, too, told his own story,† he having been sent for by the magistrates of Salem, and having come to his examination. The same thing happened when he appeared before the bewitched, as with the other accused—they falling down, &c. &c., and "Mr. Gidney (one of the examiners), bid Aldin confess and give glory to God." Aldin said he had no objections to giving glory to God, but he declined to confess—whereupon he was committed to prison, and lay in Boston prison fifteen weeks,‡ but he escaped, and once more he shall be seen alive.

The old Serpent was now creeping inland, for about this time afflictions began in Andover. Looking into the dusky future with the eye of prophecy, one can readily discover that if Beelzebub should so much as poke the end of his nose in there a century and a half later, he would have had it whipped off before he could say "Jack Robinson," for the whole ground is occupied with fighting-men, men who would have left Magnalia clean out of sight in such a crusade. As it was, however, in Oct. 1692, he found ready admission through Joseph Ballard's wife, who being sick desired greatly to know who it was that afflicted her. The thing spread like fire in the dry grass of the prairie, and soon some forty or fifty were accused and com-

* Calef, p. 209. † Neale, vol. ii. p. 153.
‡ Calef, p. 215.

mitted; some escaped, but the poor dog before mentioned was made sure of; he was hanged.

But who was this "worthy gentleman of Boston," accused by these Andover spirits, who sent down a writ,* to arrest his accusers in £1000 action for defamation? One would fain know his name, for it may possibly be that he has hit upon the true remedy for these wrong-doings, more potent than any that Magnalia and his army of coadjutors had yet applied. Who knows? for 'twas said that this "so frighted the poor creatures, that for that time the accusations at Andover generally ceased."† Money, then, not only makes mares go, but makes devils stay away!

All do know from their own experience, or from that of other men, that weariness follows excitement; that the frenzy of the debauch must become its lethargy—the greater the action, the greater also the reaction: such is human nature's law. And is not something analogous to this elsewhere discernible? The fierce heats of the summer, with its thunders, lightnings, growth, elaboration, and energy, are past—nature, too, reposes in this bright October—lulls herself to rest. But anon, when this, too, is past, we shall hear and feel the fierce blasts of the winter, with its ice and frosts—working, disintegrating, elaborating.

Through this autumn of 1692 men rested, weary and worn with such a summer; and here and there one, perhaps encouraged by this "worthy gentleman" of Boston, began to bethink himself that per-

* Neale, vol. ii. p. 155; Calef. p. 235. † Neale, vol. ii. p. 155.

haps we had gone too far or too fast—perhaps to say it; and other men crept out of the hidden places of their own souls, timidly, and inquired what it all meant. But, besides all this, is it not becoming too dangerous? cutting close, as one may say, for comfort? These young persons seem to be losing all reverence—one had cried out upon the Rev. Willard, at Boston, perhaps through a mistake,* and now at last upon Mrs. Hale, the wife of the Rev. Hale of Beverly;† even the lady of Sir William Phips, the governor, had been in danger; for, out of her tender-heartedness, had she not granted a release, or some such thing, in the governor's absence? The peculiarly spotless character of Mrs. Hale rendered this accusation a startling thing to the whole world, and might well bring others to a stop, besides her husband who, as in duty bound, had been helping in the good work.

How bad will it be should Satan, that old serpent, take it into his foolish or devilish head—after having reaped down the "poor bodies," the "poor, the aged, and the simple," of small value then as now—to clap in his sickle, and cut down the richer grain! Heavens! the thought fills one with horror too great for words.

All stand shivering in the dim and ghastly light of the past—while the ghosts of the murdered twenty swing on the gibbets, towards which the eight condemned draw nigh; the hundred in

* Calef, p. 222. † Hutchinson, vol. ii. p. 60.

prison, and the two hundred "accused," groan and tremble, and the whole world fears.

What had the saints done? Could the Devil not be content with his own, but he must desire the people of God! So it seemed. Yet one is at a loss to know why he did not *begin* with them, for he might be sure of the others without all this fuss and confusion. Let us see how it went on.

Magnalia, too, seems waking up to a new light; he says, "At last it was evidently seen that there must be a stop put, or the generation of the church of God would fall under that condemnation—henceforth, therefore, the juries generally acquitted such as were tried, fearing they had gone too far before!" At last! O slow of heart, blind leaders of the blind—at last!

And so it began to be buzzed about "that I told you how it would be;" and "all along I thought *they* were going on too fast;" it might have made one laugh if one was not too sad, to see how all the world now turned, and ran out as fast as they ran in—and how many were ready to say that the Devil was all a humbug, made up like the "poppets, of hogs' bristles and old rags," and brimstone, and Indians, and "black men." But where were all these bold men in the beginning—where were they when they were *wanted* to strangle a foul birth in its infancy? Will men NEVER learn to "resist the beginnings"—resist *them* to the death—kill them or be killed by them!

"The juries changed sooner than the judges;"*

* Hutchinson, vol. ii. p. 61.

of course, being from "the people," their sympathies were with and of the people. The clergy changed last, also of course. January 3, 1692–3, the Court sat again in Salem,* the grand jury having found true bills against some fifty; but upon trial they were (save three) acquitted,† all women, but one or two; towards which sex Satan throughout seems to have had an especial spite. January 31, it sat again in Charlestown, and some trials were had. While these trials were going on, word was brought that a reprieve had been granted to the condemned yet unhanged—whereat the Chief Justice rose and said, "We were in a way to have cleared the land of these. . . . . Who it is that obstructs the course of justice, I know not—the *Lord* (!) be merciful to the country!" with which last speech he went off the bench, and vanished from this story.‡

Sarah Daston's trial was a remarkable one, not now to be told. After her *acquittal*, Judge Danforth admonished her thus: "Woman, woman, repent; there are shrewd things come in against you!" Good counsel, truly; for, if cleared in this, perhaps she was guilty of something else. Many asserted that there was more evidence against Daston than against any at Salem, and yet, defend us heaven! she was cleared.

The winter passed away, and again the spring bloomed. On the 26th April, 1693, the Court sat in Boston, and Mary Watkins, a servant-girl, was put upon trial; even confessing and charging herself

* Calef, p. 294. † Hutch. vol. ii. p. 60. ‡ Calef, p. 295.

with being a witch—she, "having fallen into melancholy humors," had tried to strangle herself—even in this case the jury, the whole twelve, agreed to find "ignoramus;" and, though the court sent them out again, they persisted; there was nothing then but to sell her to Virginia, which was done. Capt. John Aldin, too, came back, and now reported himself to the Court: and no one could learn that he had practiced any of his abominable witchcrafts elsewhere, or that any of those escaped had done so—which was singular—nor do we know that they ever did afterward. What became of their devils we know not. Capt. Aldin was acquitted by proclamation; and Governor Phips, being about to leave the country, and wishing to signalize his government with one great act of mercy, pardoned such as were condemned, for which they gave each about 30 shillings to the king's attorney, and so the matters after that sort were ended: for the prison doors were set open, and all whatsoever they were went free. It was natural enough that some taint of bitterness should possess the minds of the accused, and the minds of all such as had lost friends—to say nothing of those Wise and Honest, which do leaven every community—for a sponge, dipped in gall, had been held to their lips. They had been done to death, these twenty—unpitied, unabsolved—not only hated of men, but hated, mocked, accused, spit upon, by their own familiar friends and neighbors. Even the sky grew black, and the face of a pitying Father in heaven was hidden from their bewitched or bewild-

ered eyes. The Reverend Hale of Beverly (he whose wife had been cried out upon), thought "that something ought to be done in a public manner for clearing the good name and reputation of some that suffered, against whom the evidence was more slender, and the grounds for charity more convincing, and so none of the surviving relations might suffer reproach on that account."*

Walter Scott said afterward (people can put what confidence in him they see fit), "It is accordingly remarkable in different countries, how often at some particular period of their history, there occurred an epidemic terror of witches, which, as fear is always cruel, glutted the public with seas of innocent blood—and how uniformly men lothed the gore after having swallowed it."†

So, then, the first church at Salem, and the inhabitants of Salem, did what they thought best by way of reparation and restitution. Rev. Mr. Noyes publicly confessed his error, "asked forgiveness, and consecrated the *residue* of his life to bless mankind." The churches removed the anathemas of excommunication and damnation from those unfortunate people, who had lost not only character but life, and lost it in the most melancholy way, objects of scorn, ridicule and hatred. The jurors signed and circulated an humble and solemn declaration of regret for the part they had borne in the trials; and JUDGE SEWALL *stood up* in the church at Boston, on the day of public humiliation, and handed in a written confession, asked forgiveness of God and the

* Neale, vol. ii. p. 165. † D. & W. p. 170.

people, and ever afterward kept an annual day of fasting, that he might never forget his sorrow and degradation for the part he had borne in these trials.*

Judge Stoughton, so it was said, saw no necessity of a public acknowledgment of it, even if he had been in error; and so he did nothing about it;† but twelve of the jurymen thought otherwise, and they signed and published a statement, asking forgiveness, and explanatory otherwise; it ran thus:

"We do therefore signify to all in general (and to the surviving sufferers in special), our deep sense of, and sorrow for, our errors, in acting on such evidence to the condemning of any person; and do hereby declare, that we justly fear, that we were sadly deluded and mistaken; for which we are much disquieted and distressed in our minds; and do therefore humbly beg forgiveness, first of God for Christ's sake, for this our error; and pray that God would not impute the guilt of it to ourselves nor others; and we also pray that we may be considered candidly and aright, by the living sufferers, as being then under the power of a strong and general delusion, utterly unacquainted with, and not experienced in, matters of that nature.‡

"Thos. Fisk, Foreman, Th. Pearly Sr.,
William Fisk, John Peabody,
John Bacheler, Thomas Perkins,
Thos. Fisk Jr., Samuel Sayer,
John Dave, Andrew Eliot,
Joseph Evelith, H. Herrick Sr."

* Upham, p. 129; Hutchinson, vol. ii.

† Hutchinson, vol. ii. p. 61.

‡ Calef, p. 302.

It is easier, however, sometimes to bear the mortification of defeat than to pay down the wager in good hard coin—and so Mr. Philip English (and others) found to his cost; for his estate, seized by the sheriff, when he fled, was to the amount of £1500, and but £300 was restored to him; the rest *he* did not get.* But whose business was it to see him righted? nobody's in particular; and no man is expected to make an ass of himself, and pay back money unless he is obliged to.

When witch testimony was good, great numbers were afflicted by them—but when it came into disrepute the afflicted vanished.† Such seemed to be the fact. And the children, too, they grew presently well. But what shall be done to them and with them? 'Tis a troublesome question, for there are so many, and the flaying alive of some few would not help the matter as any one could see; some said that perhaps they had a disorder which really did force them to do this thing; others, less charitable, said that "A little attention must force conviction, that the whole was a scene of fraud and imposture begun by young girls, who at first thought of nothing more than being pitied and indulged, and countenanced by adult persons, who were afraid of being accused themselves."‡ One can not tell what to do, or hardly what to think in such a case. This is certain, that if the children had not had help they could not have gone on as they did; and as

* Neale, vol. ii. p. 152. † Calef, p. 98.
‡ Hutchinson, vol. ii. p. 62.

to the Rev. Parris too, what can, what ought to be done with him? Suppose, in the first of this, he had "spanked" (so one said) both of these girls of his—the one nine, the other eleven years old—might it not have been attended with the happiest results? a question easy to ask but not to answer, for it was not tried. No, we have seen what this clergyman thought best to do, and what he did; and now it only remains to know what we shall do. One thing seems clear that he ought no longer to be the spiritual guide of *this* people if of any; thus many think, and so Nathaniel Jigerson, and others* drew up a paper saying that they must withdraw from his communion, &c. &c.; and stating shortly the reason why—which paper they had read to him on the 21st of April, 1693. After much talking and so on, and Parris himself being willing to stay, strange as it may seem, he sends a paper for consideration, on the 26th of Nov. 1694, which struck the dissenting members as wrong; yet it was in some sort a confession or acknowledgment, or was perhaps meant for such. He said, among other things—

1. "In that the Lord (was it not at first supposed to be the devil?) in that the Lord ordered the late horrible calamity to break out first in my family, I can not but look upon as a very sore rebuke, &c. &c.

2. "In that also in my family were some of both parties, the accusers and accused (the child and the Indian), I look upon also as an aggravation, &c.

3. "In the means which were used in my fam-

* Calef, p. 125.

ily, though totally unknown to me or mine (except servants), till afterward, to raise spirits and apparitions in no better than a diabolical way; I do also look upon as a further rebuke, &c.

4. "As to the management of these mysteries as far as concerns myself, I am very desirous, upon further light, to own any errors I have therein fallen into, and can come to a discerning of; in the meanwhile I do acknowledge upon after considerations, that were the same troubles again (which the Lord of his mercy forever prevent), I should not agree with my former apprehensions upon all points, &c."

But it all did not answer; they would not listen to the voice of the charmer—and it seemed that he must pitch his tent on the banks of another Jordan.

The Elders and Messengers of the Churches—Cotton and Increase among them—on the 3d April, 1695, met at Salem, and would fain with their holy oil calm down the yeasty waves. Good words were freely offered of their abundance—"fidelity, Christian brethren," "God," and "Satan," and such like, and yet it would seem that nothing would do; for again, on the 3d May, 1695, sixteen young men—fifty-two householders, and eighteen church members,* signed and presented a paper "plainly advising Mr. Parris to cease his labors and seek to dispose himself elsewhere,"—they clearly will not help him there—and in 1697 he went—"dismissed therefrom!"

"None of the pretended afflicted were ever

* Calef, p. 137.

brought upon trial for their fraud—as Hutchinson* calls it; some of them proved profligate persons, abandoned to all vice, others passed their days in obscurity or contempt." Nobody could envy *them*—and the people were sick of blood—they were not killed.

The ministers did not incline to give it up so—succumbing as it were to infernal Sadducees, disposed now to scoff more than ever at our Devil. On the 5th March 1694, a printed paper was issued out to ministers and others—"Certain proposals" for memorable things—especially as to "Apparitions, enchantments, possessions, and all extraordinary things wherein the existence and agency of the invisible world is more sensibly demonstrated," promising "for further encouragement, some singular marks of respect shall be studied for such good men as will actually assist it, &c. &c., signed,—

INCREASE MATHER, *Prest.*

And seven others, among whom is Cotton.

A good crop, we may well believe, was reaped with such a bright sickle as that; and yet how bad would it be if the ass would not eat the thistles after our labors! It was become uphill work, this of witchcraft—and in the end it would seem that the churches had not gained much credit—nor Religion—and that CHRISTIANITY itself may have suffered by imputation.

Magnalia "conceived that one (!) case at Salem

* Vol. ii. p. 62.

proceeded from some mistaken principle." One case! He, however, lost his fair influence in that same eastern end of Massachusetts; the boys hooted him—nay, by heavens, threw stones at him! and well might he say, in the bitterness of disappointment, "And why, after all my unwearied cares and pains to rescue the miserable from the lions and bears of Hell, which had seized them, and after all my studies to disappoint the devils in their designs to confound my neighborhood, must I be driven to the necessity of an apology?"* After all, Magnalia, so it is: such is the miserable ingratitude of Man! We now dismiss Salem witchcraft, and thee without our Blessing—and without our Cursing. For to us and to the world it was necessary to learn that Superstition is by no means Religion (nor its coadjutor), and as for Christianity, to that it is hateful.

* Story of Margaret Rule.

Children.

WHAT have they to do with mysteries? Much —much every way. Let us indulge in a short examination which may not be altogether inapplicable.

Walter Scott says, in his "Demonology and Witchcraft," "Children have no natural love for truth, and will lie to save punishment." This I for one, here and elsewhere, deny, and hold to be a profound mistake. The opposite of this counterfeit is true; namely, "Children HAVE a natural love for truth, but will lie to save punishment, and for other purposes."

Much will depend upon their parents whether they will lie at all; perhaps the parents are altogether responsible for the lies of young children. My own experience is wholly to that effect.

These wonderful little creatures are quick, keen, and true in their perceptions; they at once see through shammers, and other nebulous or gaseous persons; they are at once in communication with true men and women; and shun the false with an unerring instinct, until such time as they have

learned that something may be made by them. A rough or awkward manner may at first repel a true and godlike soul, but time soon cures this.

Punch pictures to us a dinner-table, where the father reverently says to God, "For these and all other blessings make us duly thankful;" but to his wife irreverently, "What, my dear, cold meat again?" As children have eyes, senses, souls, and are not by any means the idiots that their parents take them to be, it need surprise no one that they note the slight differences between the prayer and the practice—between meanness at home and "my dearing" before folks—between the dowdy mother of the nursery and the silk lady of the church or opera—between their own fighting and scratching up stairs and their purring manners down! And how long can a child exist in such an atmosphere, and not lie? Not a week, not a day, not an hour.

"Words" are mainly useful, some think (and it is charged that Talleyrand said so), to conceal the truth. Words may be the signs of things, or they may be chaff, which the wind blows away. Tell a child that "God sees him," and in the next breath say something, or act an act, such as is done millions of times a day in the presence of God and of children, and faith in God, respect for your words, or for the truth, have begun to blight in that child's soul.

Let us tell as many lies to ourselves as we please —let us say we are no worse than our neighbors, and only conform to the usages of society, while we in reality are disloyal to truth—neither God

nor a child can be imposed upon. In such a state of things no amount of going to church, of singing through the nose, no breadth of phylacteries will avail: a practice of selfish, worldly, devilish maxims through six days, squared up by a solemn face, a black suit and a six cent charity on the seventh, is simply a mean life-farce, which God and children both deride. The idea that Sunday is God's time is simply nonsense, if it involves the other idea that Monday, and Tuesday, and Wednesday, and Thursday, and Friday, and Saturday are not his also. Let us, then, lay down this platform:—

If the parents lie to serve their own ends, the children will lie to serve theirs; if we deceive them, they will deceive us. "The fathers have sinned, and the children are wicked."

Those who have been children (and most are supposed to have been in that stage of progress), or who remember the fact, will at once assent to their love of MYSTIFICATION. This love is inherent in man, and none knew this fact better, or used it to better effect, than your Napoleons, your Cagliostros, your Haroun al Raschids: they seemed to know of one's dinner and one's dreams, and they knew, too, that a little knowledge well used, sown in rich soil, yields more than whole granaries of inert harvests.

Let us suppose, then, that the wondering child, stimulated too often by stories of ghosts and mysteries, learns by any accident that some grown-up men and women greatly desire mystical manna; that the dreams of the Seeress of Prevost, the tales

of Mather, the visions of religionists are eagerly read by them; that their evenings are engrossed by "magnetic soirees," inquiries of the spirit world, curious sounds which must be the blabbings of some uneasy soul; indeed, that any sound *may* be a ghost—that the child learns this, and that indeed some doings of his own may have been taken for spiritual signals—that child must be very stupid indeed, worthy to be sent at once to Dr. Howe's asylum, who does not see a wide field, for fun at least, in imposing upon the assumed superiority of the elders. Add to this, if you will, a capacity for lying, and too often an education in it as before hinted, and it is easy enough to see what agency children may have in mysteries. Once begun, fear whips them up, for detection is disgrace, and disgrace is the Devil—at least of our day.

This capacity for the marvelous is not despicable—it is God-like, and reaches forth toward Infinity. Like the animal life of the early creation, which created itself out of itself, that one animalcule is multiplied to myriads—so can we in the dim light of ignorance or childhood create mystery and fearful visions, like those of Job, out of those wonders of nature, which yet lie out of our vision. How has the one tame enough black dog swelled to a monstrous size as evening's shades have overtaken the returning child; or more magical still, how has it multiplied itself into innumerable other dogs—yea, bears! Let history tell; let every one answer.

But above all things, as men let us see fairly

what IS; and in metaphysical as well as physical science, patiently search and verify.

In the childhood of Humanity the exactest analogy holds, as with the Individual child, and men have worshiped or deified what their ignorance endowed with the supernatural. The commonest occurrences of nature have been raised into miracles, and the earliest histories are rich with fable and fancy.

This constant endeavor to make the spiritual, the mystic, plain to sense has been strongest in infancy and ignorance: it is shown in that unending symbolism—that making plain of the idea—realizing in form what the spirit only can more or less dimly feel,* which symbolism has ever and always run down into idolatry, the worship of the Form in place of the Idea—and will so run for evermore, so long as it is uncontrolled by our higher power.

* Mrs. Gray's Etruria, Int. pp. 15, 64; Wilkinson's Egypt, vol. i. p. 250, and vol. ii. p. 255.

The Cock-Lane Ghost.

Whether there are or are not Ghosts who haunt about where they have existed in the body no man is bound to say; no man, at least, is bound to say his belief aloud in the face of the world. George Burroughs in his defense said there were none, and none ever had been, and he was hanged.* No sound-minded man now, would choose such an end. The experiences of Saul and of Brutus are appealed to, with a multitude of others, to prove that ghosts not only do continue upon or revisit this earth, but that they do appear to men's earthly sense; and others reply that Samuel did not appear to (was not seen by) Saul, but by the Juggler herself—and Brutus is dismissed in some like way. That unrealities do appear real to men is proven by the experience of Nicolai the bookseller of Berlin, who was for years in the daily habit of seeing, with his eyes, persons coming in and going out, who were not people at all, but growths of a diseased system. Blake the painter† saw the forms of the departed dead so dis-

* See the Salem Witchcraft accounts.

† See Cunningham's Lives.

tinctly that he drew their portraits as he called them up from their other where; but he only could see the visions. A learned professor in one of our theological seminaries, for years (perhaps does still) saw visions, processions, &c. &c., which he could not always convince himself were unreal, not living and moving beings. These are cases, however, which yield to science—calomel will kill them; Beelzebub (if these are of him) *may* cast out Beelzebub. Thus they are of no avail to the excited hunter, who is eager for quite another prey, for one which is real, for a shade which is not altogether a shade, for one which, like that of Hamlet's father, shall "speak to him," no matter how "questionable" the shape—and prove that spirit after all *is;* and also that it is matter, and can in an emergency manifest those physical properties which seem so convincing to the lower sense. For this men earnestly ask them to

> "Revisit thus the glimpses of the moon,
> Making night hideous, and we fools of nature,
> So horribly to shake our disposition
> With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls!"—*Shaks.*

But there have lived those who did not favor the idea, who could not look upon such a wandering hereafter as at all a pleasant one; thus thought the Elder Pliny—thus he wrote—some eighteen centuries ago:

"After men are buried, great diversity there is in opinion, what is become of their souls and ghosts, wandering some this way, and others that. But

this is generally held, that in what estate they were before men were born, in the same they remain when they are dead." Again, "What repose and rest should ever men have that are born of a woman, if their souls should remain in heaven above with sense, while their shadows tarried among the infernal wights?"* It becomes a curious matter of speculation, whether or not this intense yearning after a certainty of future existence which underlies all of the excitement we are to notice, indicates, indeed, a *doubt* as to whether there be any such future; or whether it be only a curiosity, which man would pry into, and so learn something of what it is. This belief and trust in an hereafter becomes doubly dear to such as drag out a miserable existence here—to the poor, the ignorant, the enslaved; for to such this is Time and that is Eternity. We shall not wonder if, by-and-by, when it is become more and more apparent that it is hard for the rich to enter into God's kingdom, that the ultra-conservative mind shall take high ground against this belief in a Future—and that not content with the lion's share, shall claim that this world is all, and so sink the Lazruses into a permanent mud. No one can tell what may happen.

However any one may "pooh-pooh" at the idea or reality of a merely sensuous manifestation from the spirit world, or however they may decide as to the meaning of the four curious Mysteries which I am about to sketch, all will agree—*all*, I think—will

* Pliny, Nat. Hist. book vii.

cherish the more beautiful and more perfected belief of the Christian mind, that the hereafter is not dreary, cold, negative or hopeless—but that when there is spirit there is life—and with it warmth and light and hope, and fruition—and that that future is not only there but here; in the words of Jesus, "the Kingdom of God is within you."* Most minds receive with pleasure the idea that there is a care and watchfulness overshadowing us, and that as soul does not die, the holy spirits that it has been our lot to unite with, shall know us hereafter, and shall watch for us, and wait our coming in that "land of the departed," the silent land. No words can more fitly body forth this belief than those of one now among the holy, lamented and loved—where he shall know more and more."†

"It is a beautiful belief,
When ended our career,
That it will be our ministry
To watch o'er others here;

"To bid the mourners cease to mourn,
The trembling be forgiven;
To bear away, from ills of clay,
The infant to its heaven."

And "we now come to the declaring the matter in few words."

It was permitted to Horace Walpole, this luxury of a visit to our Cock-Lane ghost, in addition to his sinecures and pensions and pictures, and Strawberry hills (his sky however was flecked with gout

* Luke ch. xvii. ver. 21.

† James Handasyd Perkins, Memoirs, 1851.

as some may be glad to know); he went with the Duke of York and others; but to him of what use was this or any ghost—he went and he came away; and thus he wrote on the 2d February, 1762, to George Montagu.*

"A drunken parish clerk set it on foot out of revenge; the Methodists have adopted it, and the whole town of London think of nothing else. . . . . I went to hear it, for it is not an apparition, but an *audition* [he elsewhere calls it the ghost of a noise]. We set out from the opera, changed our clothes, &c. . . . . The house, which is borrowed, and to which the ghost has adjourned, is wretchedly small and miserable. When we opened the chamber, in which were fifty people, with no light but one tallow candle at the end, we tumbled over the bed of the child, to whom the ghost comes, and whom they are murdering by inches in such insufferable heat and stench. . . . . We heard nothing! they told us, as they would at a puppet-show, that it would not come that night till seven in the morning—that is, when there are only apprentices and old women. We stayed, however, till half an hour after one. The Methodists have promised them contributions; provisions are sent in like forage, and all the taverns and ale houses in the neighborhood make fortunes. The most diverting part is to hear people wondering *when it will be found out*—as if there was any thing to find out—as if the actors would make their noises when they could be discovered!"

* Horace Walpole's Letters, vol. iii. p. 169. Phila. 1842.

Such was his experience: not an encouraging one for us at the start; but this was not all, and with patience we shall know more, and shall, perchance, "find out" more than these dilettanti cared to.

The reader must try to go backward in this matter—relinquish for a time his favorite theory of progression; and, fancying himself in London, the monster metropolis of the world in 1762, as now in 1852, see what he can of these doings. Then, as now, London was crowded with politicians, placemen, place-hunters, merchants, traders, and traffickers of all sorts, with its corresponding jostle, noise and din; then, too, 'twas a popular cry, "God for us, and the Devil take the hindmost." In so great a whirl what chance would one expect a poor and insignificant ghost could have to be heard at all, much less to attract to itself by a very small "noise" the admiration of the world. In an atmosphere, as has been well said, composed of "two parts smoke and one part mud," one would have feared for its shadowy existence, that it should have stifled in its beginning. Such was not its fate, as Walpole has said, for to the true spirit obstacles are naught. All London was astir through these months with the mysteries of Cock-lane. We can not go back to its creation; we can only follow the example of the great historian, and say that in the beginning it *was!* But in the year 1759 things began to take shape, for it was in that year that Mr. Kempe, a man of some property, moved to London, having under his protection a sister of his

deceased wife. They lodged at the house of one Parsons, in Cock-lane; and, in the absence of Kempe, Miss Fanny slept with Parsons' daughter, a child of eleven years of age. She complained at times of having been disturbed in the night by noises, which Parsons finally concluded must be occasioned by the industry of a shoemaker in the neighborhood, which shoemaker *would* work, and would work, too, at unseasonable hours.

The intimacy between Kempe and the sister of his wife was of that peculiar kind, which is not forbidden by law, while the marrying of such a sister is; and they, of course, made their wills in each other's favor, both of them being possessed of, and being heirs to some property.

Time passed, and Kempe and wife (so by courtesy) moved into other lodgings in Bartlett-street; but at last, "on the 2d February," the young woman died, and was buried in St. John's Church, Clerkenwell, A.D. 1760; and Kempe, of course, took possession of her property: so far ushers in the actors.

"From this event two years elapsed, when a report was propagated that a great knocking and scratching had been heard in the night at the house of Parsons, to the great terror of the family; all methods to discover the cause of it being ineffectual. This noise was always heard under the bed in which lay two children, the eldest of whom had slept with Mrs. Kempe, during her residence in this house." So says "Kirby's Wonderful and Eccentric Museum."*

* Published London, 1820.

Nothing could stop it: that it was the work of spirits was placed beyond a doubt, for instead of ceasing when the wainscot was taken down, it became more violent than before—ministers being called, it abated not at all.

Nor was this the only or the greatest manifestation—the girl herself saw the apparition of a "woman surrounded by a blazing light." A publican in the vicinity also saw a "bright shining figure of a woman on the stairs," and spilled his beer; for did not the figure beckon to him to follow? which he would by no means do, choosing rather to run rapidly to his home.* Parsons, too, saw this apparition. This child, this girl, who "*of course*" could not be expected to deceive any one, upon being questioned, believed truly that this was the appearance of Mrs. Kempe. Here, then, we have a clew to this dreadful mystery—MURDER! Could it be that she had been done to death? that there was something strange about her death. Come to think of it "we began to suspect." Parsons too was needy, that was not questioned, and had borrowed money of Kempe, who wanting again, did not get it but by the strong hand of the law. Mrs. Kempe's friends, now they bethought themselves, were aggrieved. They had lost their dear sister, and they had lost—her property! One remembered that "she had been surprised at not seeing a plate on her sister's coffin, though a handsome one."† Ah Kempe—are you not in a bad way? Why did you not put Mrs. Kempe's name on the coffin?

* Chambers's Miscellany, vol. viii. † See Kirby's account.

had you at that last moment a scruple as to the right of the thing? No one can answer. Reports, rumors, and suspicions are thick as autumn leaves, and Kempe must keep himself housed, or it may be a worse thing shall happen to him. The poor child has violent fits, and Parsons is certain—yes, certain that the spirit of Mrs. Kempe has entered into her.

God's manifestations are ever the same in kind; how often in detail? Nature works and walks in her old beaten tracks in Cock-lane, in Rochester, in the past, and in the present.

"On the 13th of January, between eleven and twelve o'clock at night, a respectable clergyman was sent for, who, addressing himself to the supposed spirit, desired that if any injury had been done to the person who had lived in that house, he might be answered in the affirmative by a single knock; if the contrary, by two knocks. This was immediately answered by one knock."* By heavens, Kempe, you *are* in a bad way, surely—should this departed and injured spirit choose to tell!

But that there should be no deception, it was determined to remove the girl to another house, that "any imposition might thus be detected!"

So there are collected some twenty or more persons, "two or three divines, two negroes, and about twenty others." The two negroes examined the bed carefully, that now there should be no chance for deception, and the truth be drawn out. Ah, Kempe, who would stand in your shoes?

* Kirby's account. See account of the first Rochester interview.

"They then proceeded to ask a variety of questions, which the supposed spirit answered by giving one knock in the affirmative, and two for the negative, and expressing displeasure by scratching. The following were the particulars of this extraordinary conversation:—

Q. Were you brought to an untimely end by poison?

A. Yes.

Q. In what was the poison administered—beer or purl?

A. Purl.

Q. How long before your death?

A. Three hours.

Q. Is the person called Carrots able to give any information about the poison?

A. Yes.

Q. Are you Kempe's wife's sister?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you married to Kempe?

A. No.

Q. Was any other person beside Kempe engaged in the poisoning?

A. No.

Q. Can you appear visibly to any one?

A. Yes.

Q. Will you do so?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you go out of this house?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you follow this child everywhere?

A. Yes.

Q. Are you pleased at being asked questions?

A. Yes.

Q. Does it ease your mind?

A. Yes.

Here a mysterious noise, compared to the fluttering of wings round the room was heard.

Q. How long before your death did you tell Carrots that you were poisoned?

A. One hour.

Carrots admitted that this was so.

Q. How long did Carrots live with you?

A. Three or four days.

Carrots attested the truth of this.

Q. If the accused shall be taken up, will he confess?

A. Yes.

Q. Will it ease your mind if the man be hanged?

A. Yes.

Q. How long will it be before he is executed?

A. Three years.

Q. How many clergymen are there in the room?

A. Three.

Q. How many negroes?

A. Two.

One of the clergymen, holding up a watch, asked whether it was white, yellow, blue or black: to which he was answered black. The watch was in a black shagreen case.

Q. At what time in the morning will you depart?

A. At four o'clock;—which, strange to say, was

the case.* Is it not now plain that Kempe is in a bad way? It may ease the ghost's mind to have Kempe hanged, but how will it be with Kempe's mind? We can not envy Kempe.

But let us take notice that at this interview we have this remarkable demonstration, that the spirits of the dead do revisit the haunts of their former joys and sorrows, and do *thus* clearly hold direct communication, through girls, "who are incapable of deception." Also, at this interview, some incredulous gentleman, seating himself on the side of the bed, thinking that *he* (audacious man as he was) could perhaps detect the trick, is requested to remove himself, to take himself away, which, upon his refusing to do, violent altercation ensued—the meddlesome skeptic! This troublesome person must needs propose to remove the girl to his house; which uncalled-for proposition Parsons naturally enough resisted. But the manifestation is made in other places and times, to be sure. "At eleven o'clock," at "a little before seven," "between ten and eleven," one could not tell when—the child in bed, the knocking began—"when the child was seized by a trembling and shivering, in which manner she always appeared to be affected at the departure as well as at the approach of the spirit."† At one interview, "when a gentleman in the room began speaking angrily [how could he?] to the girl, and hinting that he suspected it was some trick of hers, the child was uneasy and cried;" and, although the knocking was heard, the spirit would

* Kirby's Account. † Kirby, p. 77.

not answer so long as such a person was in the room. To be suspected in this way, when doing its best, was more than any high-minded spirit—in the flesh—would bear.

"A little before seven two clergymen came, when the fluttering noise was repeated, which was considered a sign that the spirit was pleased." One can not but be struck here, as elsewhere, at the peculiar and prominent figures which our friends the clergy make in these mysterious affairs. This should not surprise us, if we remember that it has been a very common opinion that they only are to meddle with the things of another world, and might, therefore, be allowed to learn, if they can, what that other world is. Too often they get snubbed by influential parishioners—weighty Christians—when they touch upon earth; and as the mind of man needs and must have a field for the exercise of its powers, none need wonder, and "weighty Christians" should not blame their spiritual overseers if they dabble in spirits, —— as they cannot in cotton. Every man will get what he can in the general scramble; and priests and ministers are men, for which let us return thanks.

At one of these questionings of the poor spirits, a woman, who had seen Mrs. Kempe three days before her death, asked of the spirit "how many days?" and received three knocks—which was conclusive to *her* that it was Mrs. Kempe's spirit who answered.

A person, requiring further evidence of the poisoning having been done by Mr. Kempe, requested

if it really was so, to answer by nine knocks; when, strange to say (!), nine "very slow and distinct knocks" were heard. Alas, poor Kempe!

Things are drawing to a head, one would think. We learn that "about twenty persons sat up in the room, but it was not till near six o'clock in the morning that the first alarm was given, which coming spontaneously as well as suddenly, a good deal struck the imagination of those present"—nor need we wonder at that. "The scratching was compared to that of a cat on a cane chair. The child now appeared to be in a sound sleep, and nothing further could be obtained." Discussion then took place, for men, and women too, will talk and will differ; and so they said what would become of Parsons—ay, and of the girl, too, should this at last be proven to be a humbug and imposture? One then might rather choose to be even Kempe himself! But "about seven o'clock, the girl seemed to awake in a violent fit of crying and tears. On being asked the occasion, and assured that no harm should happen to her, she declared that her tears were the effect of her imagining what would become of her father, who must be ruined and undone, if the matter should be supposed to be an imposture."* Imposture! but who told you any thing about imposture? We supposed you to be sound asleep! With a very peculiar artlessness she said, "Ay, but not so sound but that I could hear all you said!"† All signs fail in a spiritual time, it has been well said.

* Kirby, p. 79. † Ibid. p. 79.

Every effort to detect the imposture, as some still obstinately assert it to be, has failed; "her hands were carefully laid over the bed-clothes, the bed carefully looked under, &c., but no discovery was made." The traduced spirit had promised to give one other additional proof, if it must, of its verity, by knocking in the lid of its coffin in presence of a certain gentleman: perhaps skeptics would not believe then?* It may seem strange in other times when credence is rapid, and sympathy carries along the masses, that there should have been some, nay many, and they honest-minded—one may hope—and influential, who would persist in their unbelief: here was one risen from the dead in a sort, and yet it had no weight with such; they persisted in saying that there were no ghosts: not that they were sadducees, but they said "that the proof was not now and never had been carefully and scientifically gathered—that the doings rested upon reports too often of the parties themselves—that it was not consistent with the dignity of the great God who rules the universe by laws, to send a spirit to warn a libertine of his death—or that a spiritual messenger should walk about a manor-house dressed in a white sheet and dragging clanking chains, for no better purpose than to frighten old women and servant-girls—or that a ghost of departed greatness should find no other business than tapping on bedsteads, thumping the floors, clattering tea-cups, or jingling bells"—so men talked!

* Johnson's account in Boswell's Life.

We can best conceive of the shocking state of unbelief existing, by looking over hastily the following scraps collected by Kirby from the newspapers.

"The seventh son of a seventh son is just set out on a walk to London, in order to visit the spirit in Cock-lane, and as this gentleman is blessed with the faculty of second sight, it is thought he will be able to see her. The spirit's great propensity to scratching, makes it generally supposed here that Miss Fanny died of the itch rather than of the small-pox, and that the ghost is certainly mangy."*

Shocking truly—the last allusion is one to which one can hardly bear to call attention.

But it is our duty not to shrink from a duty because it is a disagreeable one. Again from a London paper, "We hear that the Rev. Mr. Moore (one of the attending clergy) is preparing a new work for the use of families, especially children, to be published in weekly numbers, called *The Ghost's Catechism.* We have been favored with a manuscript of the creed, which is as follows:—

"MR. MOORE'S BELIEF.

"I believe in signs, omens, dreams, visions, spirits, ghosts, specters, and apparitions; and in Mary Tofts, who was brought to bed of a couple of rabbits; and in Elizabeth Canning, who lived a whole month on six crusts of dry bread, and half a jug of water; and in Arnold Bauer, who made his escape from the Inquisition at Macerata; and in all the miracles of the Holy Roman Catholic Church!

* Scotland, Glasgow.

"I believe in fairies, I believe in witches, I believe in hobgoblins, I believe in the shrieking woman, I believe in the death-watch, I believe in the death-howl, I believe in Raw-head and bloody-bones, I believe in all stories, tales, legends, &c. &c. &c."

This no doubt will provoke a smile on the faces of the devilish doubters, but it can not be justly charged to the narrator; his duty is to give, in a sort of hash-way, what he gets.

One more extract must close this part of our subject. It appears as a play-bill, perhaps as a poster, on the walls of London: can we wonder that a city which permits such things, is from time to time afflicted with dire judgments, plagues, famine, burnings, &c. &c. The patience of any spirit will finally give way.

MISS FANNY'S THEATER,

IN COCK-LANE.

BY PARTICULAR DESIRE OF SEVERAL PERSONS OF QUALITY,

To-Morrow Evening, being the 16th inst.,

WILL BE PERFORMED AN ENTERTAINMENT OF

SCRATCHING AND KNOCKING,

OF THREE ACTS,

EACH TO CONCLUDE WITH A FLUTTER.

To begin precisely at 12 o'clock.

Beds, 10s. 6d.; Chairs, 5s.; Standing, 2s. 6d.

☞ No money to be returned after the first scratch, and nothing under the full price will be taken.

London is alive with this matter, in earnest and in jest—nay, not only London, but all England, Scotland; even Paris and Madrid are awake to this surprising phenomenon: tongues wag with the particulars, true and false, of the doings in Cock-lane, and ears enough are open to hear them. The sound (it is *not visible*) penetrates the triple etiquette of the Court; even in the glow and glory of a new King and a new Queen (George III.); for the Duke of York has visited the sacred precincts,* and—has returned therefrom: history does not say that he was a wiser and a better man, neither does it say that he was not. In coffee-houses we can well appreciate the value of this most mysterious dispensation or manifestation from the higher spheres. Not only in the "Miter Tavern in Fleet-street, where he loved to sit up late," but also in the Chambers in the Temple of the Colossus of British Literature, was the poor Ghost of Cock-lane shot at with the sharp arrows of wit and jeer; but may we not hope defended from time to time against well-shot shafts by Samuel Johnson himself? 'Tis true that he desired to see a ghost (as who does not), and why should he not *hear* one? notwithstanding that his apartment and furniture, and morning-dress were sufficiently uncouth—"his brown suit of clothes looked very rusty; he had a little old shriveled unpowdered wig, which was too small for his head; his shirt, neck, and knees of his breeches loose; his black worsted stockings ill drawn up; a pair of unbuckled shoes."† With

* Walpole's Letters, 1762. † Boswell's Life, Ætat. 54.

all these slovenly particularities, the man had an open mind, one which would believe what was credible, and could take into its capacious rooms the small and the great; indeed to such a mind there can be no small and no great; the mind only asks for what *is*—the Truth! and can be satisfied with no other food. All things, whether in heaven or earth, in hall or hovel, demand and receive the attention of *such* a mind.

That Johnson pulled up his stockings, tied his breeches, and furbished his wig, bent upon a sally in search of this mystic Ghost, we can at least believe; for some do believe that he went. We must bear it in mind that Boswell says he did not go—and that the great Samuel was in some sort what is termed lazy—so that though the spirit (his) was willing, his flesh may have been weak. But if he did not hear the ghost, he saw those who did, and at the request of the Rev. Dr. Douglas, and other gentlemen who made a searching visit, wrote down the upshot, which was published in The Gentleman's Magazine,* and shall appear in this account.

Something must be done! Shall not the Lord Mayor himself take the matter in hand? At any rate, the Lord Mayor shall be appealed to for his consent—for things can not go on in this way forever, and the public shall be appealed to, that there may be a private and thorough examination.

Ste. Aldrich, rector of St. John's, Clerkenwell, James Penn, lecturer of St. Anna, Aldersgate,

* Boswell's Life also.

make such an appeal—endeavor to get Parsons's consent, which is of course declined—"must consult with his friends," must have time to turn about —but at last consents that—

"If the Lord Mayor will give his approbation, the child shall be removed to the Rev. Mr. Aldrich's."

Let us read what we have of this published examination:

"About ten at night,* the gentlemen met in the chamber in which the girl, supposed to be disturbed by a spirit, had with proper caution been put to bed by several ladies.

"They sat rather more than an hour, and hearing nothing, went down stairs, where they interrogated the father of the girl, who denied in the strongest terms any knowledge or belief of fraud.

"As the supposed spirit had before publicly promised, by an affirmative knock, that it would attend one of the gentlemen into the vault under the church of St. John's, Clerkenwell, where the body is deposited, and give token of its presence there by a knock on the coffin, it was therefore determined to make this trial of the existence or veracity of the supposed spirit.

"While they were inquiring or deliberating, they were summoned into the girl's chamber by some ladies, who were near her bed, and had heard knocks and scratches. When the gentleman entered, the girl declared that she felt the spirit like a mouse upon her back, and was required to hold

* Dr. Johnson's account in Boswell.

her hands out of bed. From *that* time, though the spirit was very earnestly required to manifest its existence by appearance, by impression on the hand or body of any one present, by scratches, knocks, or any agency, no evidence of any preternatural power was exhibited.

"The spirit was then seriously advertised that the person, to whom the promise was made of striking the coffin, was about to visit the vault, and that the performance of the promise was then claimed. The company, at once, went into the church, and the gentleman, to whom the promise was made, went with one more into the vault. The spirit was then solemnly required to perform its promise, but nothing more than silence ensued. The person then supposed to be accused by the ghost, then went down with several others, but no effect was perceived. On their return, they examined the girl, but could draw no confession from her. Between two and three she desired and was permitted to go home to her father.

"It is, therefore, the opinion of the whole assembly that the child had some art of making or counterfeiting particular noises, and that there is no agency of any higher cause."*

But might they not have made a mistake in the coffin? Might they not? Kempe, to be *sure* as to that, took down the undertaker, and it seems they had not. Something, then, must have been wrong, perhaps in the air or the electricity. Things never do go just right for man in this world, and

* Kirby, pp. 82, 83.

why should they for spirits? We can not yet answer this question: but the disagreeable fact stares one in the face too often, that at the very nick and crisis of time, these spirits fail us—when the bridge is almost complete, and only the key-stone needs to be dropped to its place—then it is not dropped, and the whole thing rushes down to disastrous confusion. If such practices prevail also in the spirit-world, man is powerless, but he can at least express a sense of profound regret.

Why, then, does not Parsons put a stop to this thing—is there not danger of its ruining him, and destroying his child? It is sometimes idle or worse to attempt to stop the full expansion of natural processes. If this were really the doings of a spirit, then the child is no free agent, she must rap. If it was at first an imposture—may they not now have cause to believe in its reality? At least, they may be whirled along by the tempest they have helped to raise, and can no longer control that craving curiosity which will be satisfied—no, they must go on. This, like other things in this world, must obey the Law, must describe the circle, must come round again to its starting-point, purified as with fire, fresh and golden as its youth; or it must, if it started from nothing, come back to that—with shame and confusion of face.

Other investigators tried their hands, and whatever we may believe or disbelieve, we can not but pity that child of Parsons's.—

"She was at last removed to the house of a gentleman, where her bed was tied up in the manner

of a hammock, about a yard and a half from the ground, and her hands and feet extended as wide as they could be without injury, and fastened for two nights successively, during which no noises were heard. [The electricity again was not right *perhaps.*]

"The next day, being pressed hard to confess, and being told that if the knocking and scratching were not heard any more, she, with her father, would be sent to Newgate; an hour and a half being given her to consider, she desired she might be put to bed, to try if the noises would come. She lay in bed this night much longer than usual, but there were no noises. This was on a Saturday.

"Being told on Sunday, that the ensuing night only would be allowed for a trial, she concealed a board, about four inches broad and six long, under her stays—this board had been used to set the kettle upon. Having got into bed, she told the gentleman that she would bring Fanny at six the next morning."

The master of the house, however, being informed by the maids that the girl had taken a board to bed with her, impatiently waited for the appointed hour, when she began to knock and scratch upon the board; remarking, at the same time, what they themselves were convinced of, that "these noises were not like those which used to be made." She was then told that she had taken a board to bed with her, and on denying it, was searched, and caught in the lie.

Poor child! poor child!

This appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine:—"Saturday, 10 July, 1762. Came on before Judge Mansfield, in the Court of King's Bench, Guildhall, a trial by a special jury, against Wm. Parsons and Elizabeth his wife, Mary Frazier, a clergyman and a reputable tradesman, for a conspiracy in the Cock-lane Ghost affair, to injure the character of Mr. Wm. Kent—when they were all found guilty! The trial lasted twelve hours."

Mr. and Mrs. Parsons, Mary Frazer (who had been a sort of ghost's dragoman), the Rev. Mr. Moore, curate of St. Sepulchre, Mr. James, a tradesman—Mr. Moore and Mr. James paid Mr. Kempe £300—Parsons was set in the stocks, and, with his wife and Mary Frazer, afterward imprisoned.

"A worthy clergyman, whose faith was stronger than his reason, and who had warmly interested himself in behalf of the reality of the spirit, was so overwhelmed with grief and chagrin, that he did not long survive the detection of the imposture." He might have died of old age, for aught we know—but he is as good for a warning as any one.

Sic transit gloria mundi!

AND THE GHOST OF COCK-LANE.

Human Testimony.

Let us consider it for a few moments in the concrete, rather than the abstract, by means of illustrations, rather than by philosophizing.

1. *As to Facts.*—Should one whose word is as good as his bond, say that he saw an occurrence which is in the teeth of a universal Law, are we bound to believe him? We are not! Should he say, "I saw a man take a cannon-ball to a steeple's top, drop it, when lo, instead of falling to the ground, it rose into the sky and vanished"—should we believe him?

We might have full faith in his integrity, but we should say, "Not your evidence, nor that of a thousand other men, can establish such a fact; nothing can do it but proof that *gravitation* has ceased to be the law, or is overborne by another law, which—mark it—*must* carry off the operator and the witness in company with the ball!" That he should have known that an iron ball was in the operator's hand, but an instant before this we can believe, and that he "could discover no means" by which it had been changed, is credible; farther

than that we should not go. Starkie says,* and let us heed all, "Experience so constantly points out the generality of the laws by which nature operates, that this very generality becomes a principle; and hence in natural philosophy it sometimes happens, that from a single experiment, well made, a general conclusion may be drawn [because it agrees with a known law, or is analogous to such as are known]; so certain is it that a result is *never fortuitous*,† but is so dependent upon some general principle, that what has happened once, will again occur, under the same circumstances."‡

Let us apply this farther. Let our friend tell us that he saw the operator drop the ball and it fell to the ground, we need no oath to convince us, nor array of witnesses; because it simply agrees with what is already known.

Farther still; when we are told that a blind person can distinguish and tell by name her friends, when near to them, through the acuteness of her sense of smell, we need no great amount of evidence to convince us, because we do know of something in our own experience approximating to it, although nothing in our experience which is exactly the same.

Again, when Dr. Warren tells us (as he does)§ that by the use, for a few moments, of a pair of sham metallic tractors (of wood), a man with a

* Note, vol. i. p. 25.

† Read also, Gambier on Moral Evidence, London, 1824, p. 26.

‡ *Starkie, on Evidence*, Note vol. i. p. 25.

§ See Physical Education by J. C. Warren, M. D., Boston, 1846.

contraction of the knee-joint, of six months' standing, was able to walk about the room;—we can be surprised, as he was, but we can believe it to be true upon human testimony. So we can believe the cure of Mrs. Mattingly at Washington, by the urgent use of Prince Hohenloe's machinery; indeed any miraculous *cures* are, in a degree, comprehensible to all; because we do all know something of the wonderful magic of the imagination, and evidence therefore with regard to *it*, finds that within us which answers to it.

2. *Of the Senses.*—Signor Blitz takes an empty silk bag—he wearing a coat with tight sleeves—he beats the bag, holding it at arm's length, standing apart from any table, in view of a thousand eyes. He then takes from it one, two, a dozen eggs, he breaks one and proves it to be an egg. Every body has seen this.

"Here is another: a basket is produced, under which is put a lean Pariah dog, which successively changes to a dog with a litter of pups, a goat, a pig, &c.

"But here comes what children call 'Hocus pocus.' A man takes a small bag full of brass balls, which he throws one by one into the air, to the number of 35; none of them appear to return. After a little pause, and a significant guttural call, they are seen to fall one by one, until the whole of them are replaced in the bag."*

"Time and type" would fail to go over the list.

* India and the Hindoos, by F. De Ward, N. Y., 1850.

Believe the evidence of your senses! Do it at your peril—do it, and you are lost! "What shall we do with our senses then?" Test *their* testimony by that which is above them—judgment, history, natural law.

3. Of that which is *above or out of our Experience.*—No doubt exists of this region; it is illustrated by Walter Scott, in the most exquisite story of the Talisman. Thus, to the Oriental, who knows only of heat, it is told that water can be hardened so as to bear upon its surface, men, horses, an army! It is simply incredible, to him an idle tale. It is in this region only, that we can now admit the fact of miracles. We *know* of much—every thing it may be—which prove to us that we and the whole creation move by fixed, unalterable, unchangeable LAWS; whoso neglects, sets himself in opposition to, does not anxiously study and learn of these, is sure to suffer; there is simply no escape, so far as we can discover in our own lives, or the life of the race. So far is this comprehensible at the present day, that we can conceive of no power that can suspend or oppose a law (such as gravitation), except at the cost of distraction and chaos. The crude man, without ORDER himself, can conceive of none anywhere. All is to him arbitrary, fitful, and uncertain. God is *not arbitrary.* "Thus," speaks Montesquieu, "the creation which seems an arbitrary act, supposeth laws as invariable as the fatality of the Atheists. It would be absurd, to say that the Creator might govern

the world without these rules, since without them, it could not exist."*

"Truth is necessarily consistent with itself; in other words all facts which really did happen, did actually consist and agree with each other."†

4. *Hearsay Evidence.*—We should also bear in mind the effect upon us of "hearsay" evidence—that it is almost equal to direct testimony; so much is this found to be dangerous that Starkie‡ states that it is inadmissible before a jury in the proving of facts: he says:

"The consequence would be to let in numberless wanton, careless, and unfounded assertions, unworthy of the least regard. There would be no certainty, either as to the means of knowledge, or as to the faithfulness of transmission by the asserting party of that which he knew."§ Indeed, it is only necessary for each to call to mind the result of one inquiry into facts, learned through two or three transmissions, to be satisfied as to its utter worthlessness.

5. *Inadmissible Evidence.*—But the law does not admit the testimony, even under the sanction of an oath, of any one who has the slightest (pecuniary) interest in giving the testimony.‖ As we do not, in these investigations into psychological matters, recognize *that* as the only interest, we must, if we are wise, look not only for pecuniary, but personal motives, for direct or indirect self-deception, on the

* Spirit of Laws, book i. ch. i. † Starkie, vol. i. p. 20.
‡ Vol. i. p. 40. § Starkie, on Evidence, vol. i. p. 44.
‖ Starkie, vol. i. p. 83.

part of the narrator: for the influences of vanity, credulity, &c., as well as money. "The want of written documents, the treachery and fallaciousness of the human memory, the great temptations which perpetually occur to exclude the truth by the suppression of evidence, or the fabrication of false testimony, render it necessary to call in aid every means of ascertaining the truth upon which the law can safely rely."*

We should bear it in mind, that many wonderful things rest for their existence upon the testimony of the operators themselves, or those who, having taken a position, are influenced very strongly to sustain that position. Add to this the known capacity for the marvelous, and we have need to be thoroughly on our guard; for no one is called upon to believe in our miracles, except upon clear showing. He who seeks honestly, finds.

FACTS, then, 1. Can not *be*, opposed to *law*. Agreeing with law they can be proven.

2. The evidence of the senses alone (except of *mankind*), is not enough to prove them.

3. They may be beyond experience, but can not be opposed to it.

4. Hearsay evidence not being sufficient to prove a common occurrence, can not prove an uncommon one.

5. Interested witnesses are inadmissible.

* Starkie, vol. i. p. 18. Phila. ed.

The Causes of Facts.

"That it is both unwise and unnecessary to resort to a supernatural explanation of a fact, when a natural one will answer," is all that the cursed skeptics can ask—and certainly is no more than the believer will readily admit.

"Explain me these things," then the believer will say, "such of them as you admit to be facts. I ask no more."

Probably all that could be said in reply would be an unlimited and undigested mass of such things as these, showing *how* men have referred effects to causes.

"The late Saville Carey, who imitated the wind through a narrow chink, told Dugald Stuart that he had frequently practiced this deception in the corner of a coffee-house, and that he seldom failed to see some of the company rise to examine the tightness of the windows, while others more intent on their newspapers, contented themselves with putting on their hats, and buttoning their coats."*

Sounds.—"When sounds so mysterious in their origin are heard by persons predisposed to a belief in the marvelous, their influence over the mind must be very powerful. An inquiry into their origin, if it is made at all, will be made more in the hope of confirming than of removing the original impression, and the unfortunate victim of his own fears will also be the willing dupe of his own judgment."†

* Natural Magic, p. 158. † Sir D. Brewster, Nat. Magic.

Ventriloquism.—"Mr. St. Gille, a grocer of St. Germain en Laye, whose performances have been recorded by the Abbé de la Chapelle, had occasion to shelter himself from a storm in a neighboring convent, where the monks were in deep mourning for a much esteemed member of their community, who had been recently buried. While lamenting over the tomb of their deceased brother the slight honors which had been paid to his memory, a voice was suddenly heard to issue from the roof of the choir bewailing the condition of the deceased in Purgatory, and reproving the brotherhood for their want of zeal. The tidings of this supernatural event brought the whole fraternity to the church. The voice from above repeated its lamentations and reproaches, and the whole convent fell upon their faces, and vowed to make a reparation for their error. They accordingly chanted in full choir a 'de profundis,' during the intervals of which the spirit of the departed monk expressed his satisfaction at their pious exercises. The Prior afterward inveighed against modern skepticism on the subject of apparitions, and Mr. St. Gille had *great difficulty* in convincing the fraternity that the whole was a deception."*

The curious who have much time, and would try their patience, are referred to Reid, Stuart, and that army whose name is Legion, for further and metaphysical study. Paper would not suffice to print all of such examples as we have quoted, and each unbeliever must be left to supply himself.

* Natural Magic, p. 160.

As the matter now stands, the professors and disciples of these new mysteries, rest upon their merits; they court investigation, and ask no favors.* They do not ask you to believe that these are truly spiritual signs, because the mediums themselves "assert in the most solemn manner" that they are so. That might do, as it has done, for a credulous and ignorant time and people.

Neither do they, the honest ones among them, claim our faith in their inspired revelations, because tables move mysteriously, and curious noises proceed from their mediums. They are not altogether fools, and let us hope that their spiritual experience will guard them against this fearful upshot.

Inconclusive Evidence.

It is the common experience among ignorant, or undisciplined, or dishonest minds, to assert in the most unquestioned way that one thing is true; because some other thing quite unlike it, is admitted to be so. Let us illustrate this position.

A man who being an excellent judge of Hardware, or Theology—as his success may have demonstrated—proceeds to assert to *himself*, that therefore he is an excellent judge of other things—suppose Art; and he makes a dreadful mistake!

Again, the Oriental who is told that the effect of severe cold is to harden water so that men and horses may walk upon it; finding himself exposed to severe cold, should he then conclude that the

* See Fishbough's letter, Tribune, Aug. 7th, 1850.

river was hardened—he too might make a fatal mistake.

Again, should it be proven, to one's satisfaction, that the eyes of a picture did move, should we be justified in a conclusion, that then it could, also heal the sick? doubtful!

Again, should it be shown conclusively to any candid mind, that by the prestige of power, the sanctity of life, and the entire faith in a person which these have generated, many sudden and unprecedented cures have been made, equal, or superior to that mentioned (ante, p. 98) by Dr. Warren; satisfied of these, should we then be required to believe that the possessor of these qualities also had made iron float in air or water, or had eclipsed the sun, might we not answer as the old Norseman did? thus:—

The priests threatened the island with a desolating eruption of the volcano called Hecla. Snorro answered, "To what was the indignation of the gods owing, when the substance upon which we stand, was fluid, and scorching? Believe me, men of Iceland, the eruption of the volcano depends upon natural causes now, as it did *then*, and is not the engine of vengeance intrusted to Thor and Odin."*

Again, the following extract is a curious instance of false conclusions.

A Comet endangering the Earth.—Southey, in his "Common Place Book," relates that in A.D. 1712, Whiston predicted that the comet would appear on Wednesday, 14th October, at five minutes after

* W. Scott's Demonology and Witchcraft, p. 103.

five in the morning, and that the world would be destroyed by fire on the Friday following. His reputation was high and the comet appeared. A number of persons got into boats and barges on the Thames, thinking the water the safest place. South Sea and India Stock fell. A captain of a Dutch ship threw all of his powder into the river, that the ship might not be endangered. At noon, after the comet had appeared, it is said that more than one hundred clergymen were ferried over to Lambeth, to request that proper prayers might be prepared, there being none in the church service. People believed that the day of judgment was at hand, and some acted on this belief, as if some temporary evil was to be expected. On Thursday, more than 7,000 kept mistresses were publicly married. There was a prodigious run kept on the bank; Sir Gilbert Heathcote, at that time head director, issued orders to all the fire offices in London, requiring them to keep a good lookout, and have a particular eye upon the Bank of England.

In this, we find that *one* prediction being accomplished, it was to most, *conclusive* that the other one would be.

But how will it be with us when—admitting for this moment that a person can work any wonder or miracle—he shall therefore claim that he is competent to do some other thing, quite different from that, viz., write a new Iliad, or compose a new Gospel? that is, being able to make the cannon-ball rise, he is therefore inspired—what shall we say? Ponder it!

"The whole or none!" such is the phrase which brings us to bay; believe all that we tell you or nothing! Every lover of the marvelous will at once die, if die he must, with his face to the pack, die protesting before earth and heaven that this rule is no rule, that it is unright and devilish.

Upon no such false position, as I understand it, does any honest believer in mystery, rest; "whatever we can believe, we will believe; whatever we can explain, we will explain." Is this not the true platform? To proceed farther, one says,

"It was at last observed that where men are heated by zeal and enthusiasm, there is no degree of human testimony so strong as may not be procured for the greatest absurdity."

Cardinal de Retz tells, that when in Saragossa, he was shown in the cathedral a man who had served for seven years as door-keeper of the cathedral, upon one leg. He recovered the other one upon rubbing the stump with holy oil—and he, the Cardinal, saw the two legs, though he does not seem to have put any living faith in this miracle of his church, or to have thought it worth while to argue it. The evidence of sight in this case is not unlike that of the man Jones who related that he had had a tenpenny nail in his eye for a week, and got it out but yesterday. A miserable doubter was silenced at once when Mr. Jones took from his pocket the *identical* nail! could any one require further evidence? "Men's inclination for the marvelous has full opportunity to display itself. And thus a story which is universally exploded in the place

where it was first started, shall pass for certain at a thousand miles' distance!"* "The smallest spark may kindle into the greatest flame, because the materials are always prepared for it. The *avidum genus auricularum,* the gazing populace receive greedily without examination whatever soothes superstition and promotes wonder;" such *has* been the custom!

"By induction, as usually understood, we make it a rule to exclude all hypothesis; first of all we collect the experiments, and having obtained these, we are next to examine them and compare them; we reject the irrelative and the negative, and conclude upon the affirmations that are left. 'By this means,' says Lord Bacon, 'we question nature and conclude upon her answers.'"†

"Sir Isaac Newton laid down as one of the rules of philosophizing, that no other causes ought to be introduced than such as are true and necessary to account for the phenomena."‡

It is extremely difficult then to know the facts—it is still more difficult to generalize them so that they cohere under a law.

"No reasoning *à priori* will discover to us that water will suffocate, or that the load-stone will attract steel; and therefore no judgment can be made concerning the truth or falsehood of matters of fact, but what is constantly regulated by custom and experience, and can therefore never go higher than probability."§

* Hume's Works, vol. ii. † I. P. Cory, Philos. Inquiry.
‡ I. P. Cory. § See Leland and Gambier on Evidence, p. 109.

Probability becomes certainty to us only in the experience of a law like gravity, before cited; we are *sure* that lead will fall and not rise.

Two and two, one man says, are four; another says two and two are eight, not even by a compromise can it be "settled" that they make six.* So certain is it that the *law* overbears any inference—no matter how pleasing or profitable to men—as well as other evidence.

Positive proof of oath, or by writings, is only probable proof, and must be tested by that which is higher than it, *experience*, which has established the law.†

Men—there are such—do say this, I can not admit such a fact, or entertain such a proposition, because its *effect* would be so and so, to unsettle men's minds, or to lead people to this or that; possibly the thing may be true, whether they admit it or not! probably they are human ostriches, who hide their heads, and say *I* see nothing; the best advice to give to such men made in the likeness of God, is, "Cut out your tongue, lest you may lie; put out your eyes, lest you may see evil; tie up your hands, lest you may steal; fetter your feet, lest you may walk into the pit;" and so on; such is their process with the mind, why not with the body? Some assert in the most decided manner, that what is *true*, *is* true, and that man is not re-

* Read Thomas Higginson's address to the electors of Massachusetts, 1850.

† See Gambier on Moral Evidence, p. 67.

sponsible for it, or for its *effects*, but if any one is, that it is God.

Evidence is External and Internal, and these *must* agree.

The man of science undoubtedly believes much upon evidence; he believes the facts of observation, which are stated as such, by a Sedgwick or a Lyell or an Agassiz; men who have trained themselves to see, and who have, so far as we can discover, no temptation to deceive us, but the contrary; we believe them until we have superior testimony (our own or some one's else) and no longer! Commonly every scientific man learns of the experience of other men, and then proceeds to verify by his own experience; by actual examination of the rocks (as a geologist), by experimental proof (like the chemist); and he is no scientific man, unworthy of the name, who sits in his chair and lets others search; he must seek for himself. Just so it is in moral and psychological matters; each man, if he is a man, must dig in the mine of his own soul, and learning of others, verify every thing there.

As has been said, we are often obliged to admit facts upon the evidence of men, but the conclusions drawn from these facts are quite another thing, and we feel entirely at liberty to dissent from them, it matters not whose they are. We recognize this, that a man may have a most excellent gift of seeing, of perception, learning a fact, but may be altogether unreliable when he attempts to gen-

eralize, to lay down a LAW, under which that fact exists.

This is illustrated thus: the child perceives the scientific truth—that the wind blows, we can rely upon his capacity so far; when he generalizes as to its cause, and requests that all the trees may be cut down to render the wind less violent, then should we follow his lead, farewell reason, welcome nonsense! Occasionally, rarely, these two qualities of clear-seeing, and *honest* reasoning are joined in the same person, and then, we thank God, that from time to time such men do redeem humanity from the hopelessness of imperfection; and relieve our suspicion that a Creator has made a race of vile beasts, which *can not* be brought to full manhood.

To some minds the authority of another mind is sufficient; these are usually weak or lazy, they believe because another does or has, because "the wisest and best" have so believed. Should the man of science say I believe that the earth is the center, and that the sun goes round it, or that this geological creation was made in six days; he might have the testimony of wise and good men that such was, is, and must be the fact; and should he content himself to rest there, and never seek further, he would be as wise as that chicken, who, when a leaf fell on its tail, went crazy with the idea that it was a piece of the sky—and no wiser.*

The argument of authority is not conclusive therefore, and drops into disastrous collapse, at the

* Read Chicken Little.

prick of the pen of truth.* For it is simply true that the authority of wise and good men may be cited for any error of science,† any false principle of religion, and is so cited by every idolatrous nation under the sun. "Trust to rumor and believe a lie."‡ "What is the wisdom of the times called old? Is it the wisdom of gray hairs? No. It is the wisdom of the cradle."§ The *opinions* of our ancestors are not worth a straw—their *actions*, practices, lives, history, are valuable beyond measure, valuable because we may do better, not for imitation.

* See Warburton, Div. Leg. ii. 302. Bentham on Fallacies, pp. 44 and 71.

† St. Clement tells the story of the Arabian Phœnix in *good faith*. Ep. to Cor. § 25.

‡ See in Herodotus a story that horses are panic-struck at the sight of camels.

§ Jeremy Bentham. Read also Charles Dicken's Chimes as to the "good old times."

Is it then so that whatever the mind of man can conceive of, is therefore true, and will, before the end of time, be accomplished? Such an opinion has been advanced, defended, and believed; and shall we set ourselves to work to controvert, to demolish this subtile shade, to strangle it almost in the instant of its birth? has not man conceived of God, and made it after a fashion, and shall he not also have his spirits? Each man his own or his six* guardian angels, with whom, by-and-by, he shall hold high and holy communion, and gain great store of available and unavailable knowledge? Not as now, by the slow process of study, and inquiry, and reflection, and digestion. No one will willingly allow this hope to escape him. Indeed this converse with angels and spirits is no *new* thing. "Dr. Richard Napier was a person of great abstinence, innocence, and piety. He spent every day two hours in family prayer; when a patient or querent came to him, he presently went to his closet to pray—and told, to admiration, the

* See account sequent.

recovery or death of the patient. It appears by his papers that he did converse with the angel Raphael, who gave him the responses."*

Has not man conceived of many, many things? A Napoleon of dominion—a Pope of a universal mass book—Mrs. Partington,† of mopping out the Atlantic Ocean—John Manners, of restoring the good old times with bull-baits and beggary—Daniel, the godlike, of being one day President—Father Miller, of a vast bonfire in '43! Most men have conceived that truth can be made by a machinery of public opinion, all have dreamed of a good, idle, "dolce," stupid, kine-ish or sus-ish life, and called it happiness, and the summum bonum of earthly bliss! Let us pray to God that if, in any thing he will listen to us, it may be to avert from us the actuals of some of these ideals.

Man has conceived of the possibility (and "yet has he not made *it* real?") of conversing face to face with his departed friend—of knowing, indeed, what that other—is: so that we may yet have heaven (as it is called), unvailed, and all mystery mapped out to us, and bound in a book with golden letters on a red back; and that third region, shall we not also peer into it, or must we content ourselves with the glimpses which Dante has given us? This possibility or certainty is the matter now in hand.

That this age also may have its astounding developments, does not seem either weak or wicked. As other times have had theirs, may we not hope

* Aubrey's Mis. p. 169, Lond. 1721.

† See Sidney Smith's Speech.

that to us also shall be (or has been) vouchsafed a revelation, as to that which no man knows, or can know, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and so we, raised and exalted by one of the rising waves of humanity, lifted out of the mud in which we have so long stuck, may drift into that other "unknown shore"—at least may catch certain views of it, without being subject to those extremely disagreeable expedients termed repentance, death, and judgment. That we are on the eve of, or possibly in the midst of a "remarkable state of things," seems certain, if we can trust either the wishes or words of men. Many will look in the high places of the earth for these things, some will look, have looked, in the by-places, and have found, what? what were *they* capable of finding! But to the matters at Rochester.

"The sounds were first heard in the small village named Hydesville, in the town of Arcadia, Wayne County, New York," and let us make all sure by adding United States of America, for one's inventions or revelations are no ways safe from the designs of theives and charlatans. The modest and unpretending book which ushers in this newborn influx, is entitled—

"*Authorized Edition.*

"History of the strange sounds or rappings heard in Rochester and Western New York, and usually called the

MYSTERIOUS NOISES;

which are supposed by many to be communica-

tions from the spirit world, together with all the explanation that can as yet be given of the matter. Rochester, D. M. DEWEY. *Arcade Hall*, 1850."

Let no reader, at this stage of the business, closing the work in an energetic way, exclaim, humbug, delusion, or tomfoolery; should he do so it would not be well with him. Stupid it may be, but what if it should be true? the labor pays.

The house seems to have been a quiet and respectable house, for aught that is stated, and there is no reason to suppose that the timber had been practiced upon by elves, or the "good people" who haunt the woods. A remarkable fact in its history is, that "it was moved into," on the 11th December, 1847, by the family of Mr. John D. Fox, so the narrator states: through which family this influx, or manifestation, or development has come to us. If we can believe, the house then received a shock from which it did not soon recover, and one which is not easily explained. Let us, however, take note of the words of another who took down the account from the mouth of Mrs. Fox, a venerable lady of some sixty winters, she then being at the house of one Partridge in New York, on the 1st May, 1851. For by the mouths of *two* witnesses, perhaps this thing will be established.

"'Twas in December of the year 1847, that she moved from Rochester into this hired house. Very soon they were disturbed after going to bed, by various noises—which however did not attract much attention, as they supposed them to be made by the rats which do sometimes of themselves

have strange doings. It is a pity that the age and condition of the house are not stated in either account, they were, however, disturbed, and indeed kept awake some, until they began to suspect that mischievous persons might be playing tricks. Examination, however, did not show any such explanation, and they were obliged to content themselves with the rats, until after a space of nearly four months, when on the last day of March, year 1848, they determined to go to bed early, so as to get a good night's rest, in spite of all noise, but this was not permitted; the thought *then* struck Mrs. Fox, whose bed was in the same room with that of her two daughters, Margaretta, aged fifteen, and Katy, aged twelve, that she would question the noise.

"Who makes the noise?

Is it made by any person living?

Is it made by any one dead? Rap.

If by an injured spirit? Rap.

If injured by her or her family?

If by various other names? Getting no farther reply, she arose somewhat excited, and called her husband, and some of the neighbors who were yet up.

The two girls, so Mrs. Fox states, were not apparently as much excited as she was, but entered with some spirit into the doings of the other spirit, one of them snapping her fingers, and asking the spirit to do as they did, which it did do.

One of the neighbors followed up the injured spirit, asking when the injury was done? five raps indicating, as they supposed, five years.

What name did the injury? Rap at the name mentioned of a man who had lived there some five years before.

Is the body here, then—in the cellar? A rap was heard, and they determined to dig, but somehow learned that they must delay it some four months, and of course did so.

Mrs. F. stated, that upon digging at the time mentioned, her son and two others found some pieces of bone, but whether or not those of a man does not seem to have been ascertained. The person accused by the spirit she said was much outraged, but took no very efficient steps to remove so questionable an accusation. Mrs. Fox stated that she left the house and lived with some friends, as the excitement for or against them was so considerable; but strange to say the sounds followed her two girls, and in the course of the summer the alphabet was revealed to the son when alone in the wonderful house.

The son's wife, also, for a time, she stated, was a "medium," for such is the title now used, but has somehow lost the gift.

(Signed,) CH. W. ELLIOTT.

NEW YORK, May, 1851.

As this account mainly agrees with the authorized edition, it is worthy of credit. So far it is remarkable only, in that this quaking of the "house" is not explained through the "medium" of the rats, nor indeed in any way, except that ill-disposed and unbelieving people faintly suggest

the daughters! Let us, however, dismiss the inference and proceed. It is to be noted, in the above story, which Mrs. Fox having so often told, there is no probability of error, that the spirit being an injured one, can easily revisit the scene of his sufferings; such things having over and over again been believed, or partly believed, upon good evidence, or bad, or none; as the flood of written and traditional ghost stories bears witness. It is also worthy of remark that *Murder* becomes the pivot upon which the interest turns, as is customary; so far we are content—it is canonical and correct; but is it not the first time in any such wonderful communication, except one, that the ghost has so clearly pointed out the murderer? Except one—that is Hamlet's father. He spoke out like a man, rather than as a ghost, thus—

> "That incestuous, that adulterous beast,
> With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts, &c."

It is unlucky that the spirits have taken up this method of knocking; for we learn from the "Authorized Edition,"* that there is a doubt as to what letter the knock applies, and in a case of this importance we should be slow to hang a man upon the peculiar evidence in hand.

The daughters—to them allusion has been made, and we may be helped in our investigations, by the following scrap from the "Authorized Edition."

"Mrs. R. heard the sounds, and commenced asking questions, which were answered correctly,"

* P. 56.

greatly to her astonishment. She says the girls continued to be much frightened, and she told them not to be afraid; if it was a revelation from the spirit world, it was not to injure them. One of the girls (Margaretta? Catherine? we can not know which), said with much feeling—"*We are innocent!* how good it is to have a clear conscience." This is evidence which few will question, unless they be possessed, as Cotton Mather says, with a "certain dirtiness of mind," which God forbid *should* be imputed to any. All we can say is, who *had* accused them?

Proceeding along our way, we discover,* that the family could not stay there, "in the small village of Hydesville," and broke up; a part going to Rochester, to reside with an older sister, Mrs. FISH, who now, for the first time, becomes to us an entity, visible in the newspapers and elsewhere. She, Mrs. Fish, as many well know, has also become a "medium," or conduit-pipe for the divine afflatus, and as some think is superior to the old and authorized edition. When and how the divine manifestation was made to her we are not at liberty to say, the authorized writer being silent—but it seems quite certain that it was "*after* Margaretta came to Rochester."† "The next place where the sounds were heard was in Auburn; the youngest daughter (Catherine) of Mrs. Fox visited some

* Auth. Ed. p. 19.

† Mrs. Culver's letter or affidavit hereinafter printed, says Mrs. Fish, *first* "discovered" the way to make the sounds, but was too conscientious, &c. This must be a mistake, or else Mrs. F. must have "conquered her prejudices."

friends in that city, at whose residence the manifestations were made."*

"It is stated, also, upon perfectly *reliable authority*," so the writer asserts, that the sounds have been heard in the house of Mr. G., a "Methodist Episcopalian," "in the family of Mr. Beaver," "in six or eight families in Auburn—where the spirit communicates freely;" and all these (characters) are "beyond reproach." So far well, but let us dismiss them also from our thoughts, for if the spirit does now (then Aug. 1851), still communicate freely, no one appears to be the wiser, while with or through the two Foxes and Mrs. Fish, the spirits do still hold unabated communion.

But let us plunge into the midst of things, and fish up what will interest us.

First, as to the SOUNDS or NOISES, what are they, and how do they come to us?

The Authorized Edition thus speaks:—"The sounds vary from a light metallic, clear sound, to a dull muffled one, like a rap with the knuckles upon a partition covered with cloth. When one rap is heard, an affirmative is meant. Silence, instead of giving consent, implies a negative. When a question is asked which does not admit of an answer by a single yes or no, the alphabet is called for by a peculiar rap. In spelling out a sentence by letters, one of the ladies commences repeating the alphabet, and when the desired letter is mentioned, a rap is heard." All this is clear and simple enough, though rather slow for spirits in these

* Auth. Ed. p. 21.

rail-road days. But we can never tell what may come.

Another writer describes these "Noises," as "curious in their character, much like what one might make by loud drumming with the ends of the fingers upon a table or sounding-board covered with cloth; they varied in force from faint to loud, rising and falling gradually, and producing the effect of their moving (or running) along the carpet under the girls." The sounds go where the girls go—so the authorized edition—and we learn of no instance of their being heard in rooms of the house where they are not. Is it not asking too much that heaven should work when its favorites are absent? Did not Moses stand *before* Pharaoh when he did his wonders? Cagliostro, too, worked no miracles in Bale when he himself was in Cologne.

The sounds are *usually* heard near or under the girls—but if we can place reliance upon the numerous witnesses in the authorized edition, and elsewhere, they are sometimes heard in parts of the room distant from them. Herr Alexander was accustomed to imitate the buzz and sound of a bee, as all have heard it hitting itself about on the ceiling of the room in such an unproductive manner, and where *he* pointed, *there* the sound appeared to be. Ventriloquism has nothing to do with these *three* girls, it is absurd to suppose it; but it is not so absurd to suppose that men whose brains are almost addle, should believe that "Noises" come from any point they are told they come—and especially if they are told it by one having author-

ity, by one who is known to be a constant "conduit pipe" for the gods.

Noise! what thing in this world is equal to it? what more desired—what more costly—what more deceitful? Fame, shouts of the multitude, crying hosannahs perhaps to-day, crucify him, to-morrow; Lind jubilees, with a high-priest Barnum in Tripler Hall, at ten thousand dollars an hour, with ten thousand ears, who *pretend* only to hear the noise.

Did not the stone walls of Jericho tumble flat at the blowing of the ram's horns of Israel? shall we, shall the stronghold of each man's conscience and respect be able to stand? Twice during the past year have we shaken to our shoes, once rapt away by tremulous notes of a woman from Sweden, and once frightened so that our poor wits were almost gone, by the cry of wolf! wolf! from the "chivalrous" South. How shall we then thus weakened, stand against the Rochester "Knockings," the Stratford "noises," the mysterious "sounds."

Deeper yet must we go before we reach bottom and bring up thence handsful of pearls and shells, or perhaps to find that there is no bottom. Two communications will help us—the first from the authorized edition, and a Rev., the second from one whom the reader may rest assured is not a Reverend.

Letters from persons who have investigated the mystery:—

Letter from the Rev. C. Hammond.

MR. D. M. DEWEY:

Dear Sir,—In compliance with your solicitation, I will proceed to lay before you a brief statement of what has fallen under my observation, in regard to the "mysterious sounds" and "demonstrations," purporting to be made by intelligent spirits, who once inhabited an earthly tabernacle. It is quite probable that many others may have had more convincing and satisfactory evidences of the real presence of their departed, or, as I should say, deceased friends, than myself; yet I am free to acknowledge my inability to account for these marvelous manifestations by any law, recognized in science or philosophy,—nor am I aware of having an organization so extra-credulous as to admit theoretical propositions, without facts to sustain them. If, therefore, imposition and deception have "humbugged" me into a conviction that the "sounds" and "demonstrations" which I have witnessed originate in any cause other than those assigned in this narrative, the person who shall disclose the mystery and detect the fraud, will receive my grateful acknowledgments.

In the early part of January last, in company with other persons, I gained an introduction to the family in this city in whose residence these sounds had been heard. They received us politely, and seemed rather more cheerful than what I had supposed would be natural for those who were hourly exchanging communications with the spirits

of the revered dead. A company of twenty or more persons had assembled—the "three sisters" came into the room—the sounds were heard—and through the medium of the alphabet, they, and about half of the company, were directed to retire to another apartment. Our company, in the absence of the "three sisters" whose presence is generally deemed essential to those spiritual communications, were all seated closely around an ordinary dining table, when one of the ladies, bowing her head, inquired in rather a solemn tone, "Will the spirit answer questions now?" No response being made, I felt the disappointment of the lady, and was half inclined to smile at the ludicrous scene; when the searching glance of her suspicious eye falling upon me, bade me maintain my usual gravity and respect toward the company, and the occasion which had called us there. After several ineffectual attempts to get responses, the sounds were heard, and the company generally were privileged with answers to their respective interrogatories. I availed myself of the opportunity, but gained no other satisfaction than a prompt assurance that all my "test questions" should be answered when I should come there again. I went away skeptical, though unable to account for the "sounds," which caused the floor occasionally to vibrate under my feet.

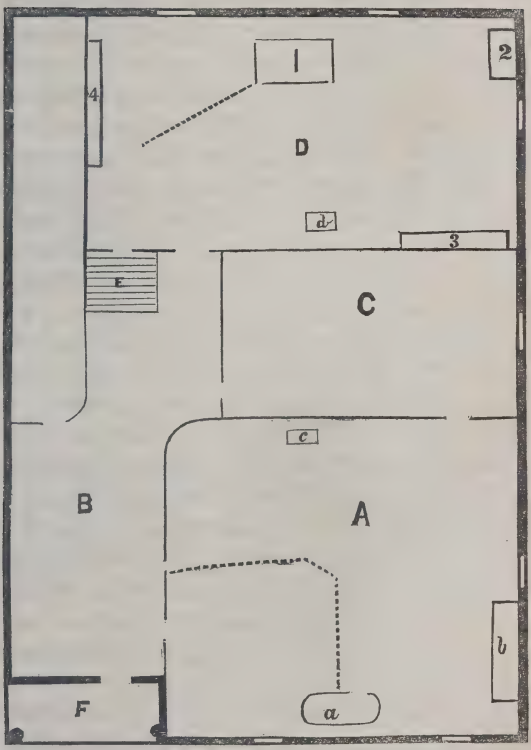
On my next visit I was much more successful. During the interval I had prepared my mind with certain questions, touching events unknown to the family, and of a remote date. The sounds told me

my age precisely, though my appearance is such as to indicate a difference of eight or ten years. The names of six of my nearest deceased relatives were given me. I then inquired, "Will the spirit, who now makes these sounds, give me its name?" Five sounds directed me to the alphabet, which I repeated until the name of "Charles" appeared, which answered to an infant child whom we consigned to the grave in March, 1843. To my inquiries, it gave me a true answer in regard to the time it had been in the spirit-land, and also the period since my eldest sister's death, which was nearly eighteen years,—the latter fact not being recollected then, I found true by dates on my return home. Many other test questions were correctly answered; and yet, notwithstanding the origin of these sounds seemed inexplicable, I was inclined to impute them to mesmerism or clairvoyance. However, as the spirit promised to satisfy me by other demonstrations when I came again, I patiently awaited the opportunity.

On the third visit, I was selected from half a dozen gentlemen, and directed by these sounds to retire to another apartment, in company with the "three sisters" and their aged mother. It was about eight o'clock in the evening. A lighted candle was placed on a large table, and we seated ourselves around it. I occupied one side of the table, the mother and youngest daughter the right, and two of the sisters the left, leaving the opposite side of the table vacant. On taking our positions the sounds were heard, and continued to multiply

and become more violent, until every part of the room trembled with their demonstrations. They were unlike any I had heard before. Suddenly, as we were all resting on the table, I felt the side next to me move upward—I pressed upon it heavily, but soon it passed out of the reach of us all—full six feet from me, and at least four from the nearest person to it. I saw distinctly its position—not a thread could have connected it with any of the company without my notice, for I had come to detect imposition, if it could be found. In this position it was situated when the question was asked, "Will the spirit move the table back where it was before?" And back it came, as though it were carried on the head of some one who had not suited his position to a perfect equipoise, the balance being sometimes in favor of one side and then the other. But it regained its first position. In the mean time the "demonstrations" grew louder and louder. The family commenced and sung the "spirit's song," and several other pieces of sacred music, during which accurate time was marked on the table, causing it to vibrate—a transparent hand, resembling a shadow, presented itself before my face—I felt fingers taking hold of a lock of hair on the left side of my head, causing an inclination of several inches—then a cold, death-like hand was drawn designedly over my face—three gentle raps on my left knee—my right limb forcibly pulled, against strong resistance, under the table—a violent shaking, as though two hands were applied to my shoulders—myself and chair

DIAGRAM OF MRS. FOX'S HOUSE.



A Front Parlor. D Sitting Room.
B Front Hall. E Flight of Stairs.
C Bed Room.

1. Table moved in presence of Hammond.
2. Bureau " " "
3, 4. Lounges " "

a Centre table has moved, see lines . . . .
b Piano Forte. *c* Stove.

See Rev. Mr. Hammond's letter, page 125.

uplifted, and moved back a few inches, and several slaps, as with a hand, on the side of my head, which were repeated on each one of the company, more rapid than I could count. During these manifestations, a piece of pasteboard, nearly a foot square, was swung with such velocity before us as to throw a strong current of air in our faces—a paper curtain attached to one of the windows was rolled up and unrolled twice—a lounge immediately behind me was shaken violently—two small drawers in a bureau, played back and forth with inconceivable rapidity—a sound resembling a man sawing boards and planing them, was heard under the table—a common spinning-wheel seemed to be in motion making a very natural buzz of the spindle—a reel articulated each knot wound upon it, while the sound of a rocking cradle indicated maternal care for the infant's slumbers. These were among many other demonstrations which I witnessed that evening, amid which I felt a perfect self-possession, and in no instance the slightest embarrassment, except a momentary chill when the cold hand was applied to my face, similar to a sensation I have realized when touching a dead body. That any of the company could have performed these things, under the circumstances in which we were situated, would require a greater stretch of credulity on my part, than it would to believe it was the work of spirits. It could not, by any possibility, have been done by them, nor even attempted, without detection. And I may add, that near the close of the demonstrations at this visit,

there was a vibration of the floor, as though several tons in weight had been uplifted and suddenly fallen again upon it. This caused every thing in the room to shake violently for several minutes, when the force was withdrawn.

I have also tested the intelligence of these spirits in every way my ingenuity could invent. On one occasion, I wrote a word on a slip of paper privately, placed it in my wallet, went there—and the sounds, through the alphabet, spelled that word correctly as I had written it. That word was "Sibyl."

On the 20th of February, inst., the two youngest sisters made my family a visit. Here the sounds were heard—questions involving subjects wholly unknown to them, were answered—a large heavy dining table was moved several times; and on expressing thanks at the table to the Giver of all good, some six or eight sounds responded to every sentence I uttered, by making loud and distinct sounds in various parts of the room. Yours truly,

C. HAMMOND.

ROCHESTER, Feb. 22d, 1850.

The "REVELATION," what is it?

One revelation men know of, I at least, which may be relied on—and one only. Let me not, however, wantonly shock the prejudices of my Hindoo or other readers thus early; or say now that it is or is not contained in this new gospel according to the Misses Fox. Many now are afloat in this matter of direct communication, as it is

called, and many fancy at times, that they do not believe in any, direct or indirect; in fact that they do not believe in a responsibility for wrong-doing, or in aught except what is laid down in a certain early catechism, thus—

> The good old rule sufficeth them,
> The simple plan,
> That he should *keep*, who has the power:
> And he should get who can!

Our principal business is to find out if we can what this new gospel really is, and what it teaches. Nothing can be fairer, and nothing will carry conviction to the true and earnest inquirer, so conclusively as the revelations themselves, which shall here be truly and honestly given; let each one read, mark, learn, and honestly digest them too. It is not easy to decide always what is Gospel, and what is not; and the reader must bear with the infirmities of the writer. Let us begin.

"We are spirits of deceased persons, we enter the spirit world just as we leave the body, some good and some evil. The evil continue evil, and the good, good; and we are in a progressive state either way."* "She told me in reply to my queries that human spirits after they leave this stage of existence enter upon a sphere in advance of the one they pass from—that they are the subjects of universal law, that of progress; and occupy such sphere as the state of their purity and advancement at the time of their death (so called), prepares them for."†

* Auth. Ed. p. 41. † Ibid. p. 41.

The *prime* purpose of the revelation, so far as it has come, seems to be utterly to demolish Sadduceeism, and drive its most respectable followers to the wall.

"Do persons ever converse with evil spirits? Answer in the affirmative. Have persons been deceived in that way? Ans. They have."*

"Do you mean that spirits are learned or ignorant, as persons were when in this life? We do. [I had at several times received communications in which the words were mispelled.]"†

"Have all spirits their distinct and different signals by which they may be known? Ans. They have."‡

"We can and do affect matter at our will. But it is said that you make such manifestations in the dark only; this leads to suspicion, with all the precaution that can be taken—why not do this in the light? Ans. Because that in such manifestations we assume a material form, and it would frighten."§ [Note—why.]

"What is your mission? To benefit mankind. How so? By imparting important truths. Why do you limit your communications to these persons, and by such a tedious process? We do as we are permitted. The people are not yet prepared, &c."‖

"The mother then asked a few questions of her child's spirit, such as 'Are you very happy? are you often with me? must I cease to grieve that I have lost you, and remember that you are per-

* Auth. Ed. p. 36. † Ibid. ‡ Ib.
§ Ib. p. 38. ‖ Ib. p. 38.

mitted, although unseen, to be with me still?' The mother left the room in tears, but they were not the outburst of sorrow. Gladness was in her heart."* The vexed question of the immortality of the soul is then at last set at rest, thank goodness.

"The father was excited even to tears; in his joy, he wept! His thoughts were at once drawn from the lonely church-yard, where he in grief had seen the loved ones laid away from him in the cold earth. His children were with him again! Death died in an instant; and the parent was not bereft! He spoke to his own, and his own answered him. Their conversation was in substance as follows: the replies to the questions being spelled out by alphabet through the sounds.

"Are you happy?"

"Yes."

"Do you visit me sometimes?"

"Dear father, we are always with you."

"Do you love music as you did when on the earth? and can you indulge in that delight where you now are?"

"Yes." And here a tune was rapped out by them together, as they had been in the habit of accompanying each other when in this world.

"Do you desire to have me with you where you are?"

"Not yet."

"Would you like to return to earth?"

"No! this is a happy world."

The above interview was invested with peculiar

* Auth. Ed. p. 42.

and intense interest; for many gloomy and erroneous thoughts associated with death, and concerning the realities of the "world beyond the grave," had frequently overshadowed and bewildered the brighter hopes and contemplations of the father; and those thoughts were, on this very impressive occasion, swept away; his hopes, no longer obscured, were converted into blissful realities, and already he had met his children on the threshold of the spirit-land."*

One Benjamin Franklin, too, has given us a Revelation—it is published in the authorized edition,† and runs in this wise: "Now I am ready, my friends. There will be great changes in the nineteenth century. Things that now look dark and mysterious to you, will be laid plain before your sight—mysteries are going to be revealed—the world will be enlightened—I sign my name, Benjamin Franklin. Do not go into the other room." This took place on the 23d of February, year of our era, 1850. Do we still wait, or have these things "changed" or been made plain? Patience, patience, we say. But again:

The great archi-magus himself, Andrew Jackson Davis, has been out with a sort of exploring party of spirits, and as he throws much valuable light upon the matter, we can not do better than to see by it: he had Doctor Franklin—Benjamin Franklin, in company, and he gives the Doctor's own account of the matter, as follows,—

* Davis's Philosophy of Spiritual Intercourse. N. Y. 1851.
† P. 62.

"We now passed over Western New York. And particularly at Auburn and Rochester—perceiving there the required pre-requisites—we opened the first communications which have, to any extent, engaged the world's attention and interested the skeptical intellect.

"We rejoiced in the success of our experiments, especially when we found that the *sounds* we occasioned were drawing numbers to inquire into their origin, and to seek out from whence they came; but we could not prevent frequent misunderstandings. The people, in consequence of their excitement and ignorance of the spiritual causes of the intercourse, would unconsciously to themselves glide into many erroneous decisions and conclusions; which remain in the world even now uncorrected. Neither could we prevent the almost exact human imitations of our vibrations; whereby occasional sentences were incorrectly spelled out,—contradicting *our* directions to the 'mediums,' and in opposition to several conditions which we specified as being essential to a proper intercourse through sounds. In the midst of our directions and communications, 'confusion' has been 'rapped' out, and our characters for *good* and *evil* were, so to speak, in a measure often at the mercy of our mediums and terrestrial audiences. I have not myself* produced many vibrations.

"'Since this method of sensuous communication has become satisfactorily established, whereby spirits can address the *material* senses of their earthly

* Viz. B. Franklin.

friends, great numbers in this sphere are constantly, and with enthusiastic joy, imparting thoughts and affectionate sentiments to mankind. Yea, the joys and gratifications which flow from this new application of the *panthea principle*,* into the different societies of our divine world, and coincidentally and simultaneously into the hearts and understandings of many pure and constant minds on the earth, can not be uttered,—only experienced! When the earth's inhabitants concentrate their intelligence and mechanical skill, and construct vessels and place them under the guidance of enterprising and energetic minds, which gladly attempt the exploration of new countries and continents—discovering thereby more convenient paths or means of commerce and national intercommunication,—when men accomplish all this, and much more, and a whole nation is moved to gratitude and internal congratulations in consequence thereof, then is manifested, *incipiently*, on earth something of that *joyous sensation* which thrilled the souls of innumerable minds in this Divine Land, occasioned by the announcement of the development of this new method of imparting beatifying thoughts and affectionate sentiments to the dwellers of the earth! If mankind would obtain truth and righteousness through this new method, I admonish all to study the great sustaining principles which

* By influx, I learn from Dr. Franklin that the "panthea principle" signified "divine element;" for spirits, he affirms, consider *all* elements as modifications of one great central PRINCIPLE of Love, Will, and Wisdom.

organize and control both matter and mind,—to recognize and OBEY the unchangeable laws that govern the whole SYSTEM of material and celestial existence. By these principles,—by their unvarying teachings and lofty tendencies—the comprehensive and healthy mind may decide upon the truth or falsity of all assertions which refer to things beyond the possibility of sensuous demonstration. Let all external manifestations be referred to interior principles, which should be by all men considered as the *methods* of the Divine Existence. Progress in goodness, wisdom, and truth; and FEAR NOT!

"'Through thee, I now desire to remind the world of a remark that I* once made to a very dear friend while we were both residing on the earth. A skepticism of the intellect concerning the doctrine of the immortality of the human *mind*—in a real and palpable state of existence and identification—long occupied my thoughts. I once knew what it is to be a disbeliever in the soul's future life. This doubt I seldom expressed to any one, not even to my most private friends. Because I *felt* the necessity of a living faith among men; I desired it more for others than for myself; my understanding seemed enough for my happiness; and to apply it well and without cessation, was the effort of my terrestrial existence. But one day—I remember it well—when my mind was filled with prophetic contemplations and anticipations concerning the scientific advancements, commercial

* Viz. B. Franklin.

improvements, governmental progressions, and the march of education, freedom, and intelligence in the country I most loved—America, I felt a strong desire to behold my country's prosperity about a *century* from the time I conceived the thoughts of which I am now speaking. I therefore expressed a wish that some means could be discovered by which my physical body might be kept in a state of preservation—and I, a thinking being, be placed in a species of sleep for the period of fifty years, when I desired to be awakened to a full realization of the advancements of time, and of its wondrous unfoldings. Let me now say to those who remember this remark, that I have more than realized my every conception of future joy; and this signifies much; for even while on earth, my conception of joy never included the externals and superficialities of existence.'

"The above is a truthful record of Dr. Franklin's statement concerning the *origin* and early *progress* of electrical communications, as accomplished by the inhabitants of the Spirit-Land. And, I think, from his explanation of the unavoidable derangements in the vibrations, that my readers already begin to understand *why* mistakes and contradictions are evolved from this new method of intercourse between the natural and the spiritual worlds."*

"Mistakes and contradictions!" and here right in the middle of this most remarkable state of things! We would not believe it except upon the positive testimony of the high-priest himself,

* Philos. of Sp. Intercourse. P. 80. N. Y. 1851.

and Doctor Franklin. God knows that we were bewildered with mistakes and contradictions enough under the old dispensation—and we had hoped fondly, though unwisely, as we now reluctantly admit—that old things, especially old habits of this sort, should be done away. Let all spirits, too, bear it in mind, that the last ounce breaks the camel's back—and that there *is* a last ounce in matters of faith.

The Archi-Magus thus illustrates what in mere earthly phrase would be termed "Solemn Farce:"

"On several occasions (which I will not now particularly designate), I perceive occurrences something like the following:

"A circle is organized for the purpose of eliciting a certain kind of theological communication; a member—in behalf of the association—inquires:—'Will any of the Apostles communicate with us?'

"Rap, Rap, Rap! Or, three sounds, meaning, as they comprehend it, an affirmative.

"'Is St. Paul present?'

"Raps, supposed to signify, 'yes.' Then follows a succession of sounds, punctuated by different distances of time between some of them, regarded as his 'signal.'

"Now, the secretary of the meeting produces his well-written and well-arranged sentences, in the form of interrogatories, and reading one of them at a time, he asks:

"'Is this true?'

"Three Raps (or yes), are his answer. Again, coming to a question, which *all* the circle *expect*

will be negatived by the spirits, as being unqualifiedly untrue, the secretary inquires, with a *doubtful* emphasis:

"'Is this also true?'

"A single 'Rap,' meaning 'no,' is the immediate response; and the record thereof is accordingly made.

"The above has been presented to me as a general representation of the manner in which a great variety of theological and doctrinal questions have been put to spirits, and responded to by them, in accordance with the preponderating 'creed' of the circle which is organized to receive the communications. And I am here impressed to answer a question which must involuntarily arise in the reader's mind:—'How is it that a spirit like St. Paul—so *positive* and so *advanced* as he necessarily must be—should respond to questions thus sympathetically?' This point I have been led to carefully investigate; and at no one of *the circles* referred to do I discover, upon the most critical interior retrospection, a *single* communication from the veritable apostle Paul, nor from any one of his glorious compeers. But I find a *friend* or a *relative* of some person or persons in the circle in sympathetic communication with the members at the meeting, and answering the questioner."* So far Mr. Davis himself—now something not unlike this brought the writer to a stop a few days since, and is inserted as curious at least.

* Spiritual Intercourse, p. 85.

Sir Humphry Davy thus records his spiritual impressions obtained by the help of *Nitrous Gas:*

"I gradually began to lose the perception of external things, and a vivid and intense recollection of some former experiments passed through my mind"—"I existed in a world of newly-connected and newly-modified ideas"—"as I recovered my former state (natural) of mind I felt an inclination to communicate the discoveries I had made during the experiment. I endeavored to recall the ideas; they were feeble and indistinct—one recollection of terms, however, presented itself, and with the most intense belief and prophetic manner, I exclaimed to Dr. Kinglake—'Nothing exists but thoughts—the universe is composed of impressions, ideas, pleasures and pains;'"—not so much unlike the oracular utterances of ancient or modern prophets as to make us ashamed of the inspired chemist.

It is out of the question that here all of these new revelations should be collected; at some future day this will no doubt be done, and we may then hope to read at our ease on holydays this "Bible" for the year or time beginning in 1847, or 8, or 9. It is our business, as has been well said, to stick to what we have in hand, and to present whatever will enable the minds of this generation to benefit by the light they have. I say, therefore, here in the words of one Fishbough,* a grand master of the new order: "The word Humbug may be used by an idiot or a parrot, as well as by a philosopher,

* Letter in N. Y. Tribune, August 7, 1850

and it may be employed with equal facility in denouncing truth as error [true—true]. Bring forth then your 'strong reasons,' and either *prove* this matter a heaven-daring swindle, or else (!) one of the most important developments which God in his goodness has ever vouchsafed to a benighted world!" Come now!

Let us recover breath, and compose ourselves for further investigation.

Through all the numerous interviews between men and spirits which have come to notice, we look in vain for the confession of any one spirit, that he (or she) is then and there going through a course of treatment—calorific or other—for what are familiarly called "the sins done in the body." There is then no HELL? Are we justified in assuming this position? At any rate, none can wonder at, and but feebly blame the too earnest tone of the religious press—at times vindictive, at others sharp with ridicule or sarcasm—in view of this most heterodox practice. "Of what use (and well may they ask) then are we—theological officers that we are? We priests, who stand between man and God, or between man and the devil? What becomes of our gowns, our tools, our flexions and genuflexions, our posture and imposture, our bowing and our curtesying?"* They may truly hope that this new hydra shall be scotched, or police captains will stand in their shoes.

PRESTO!

"Let the thunder-bolt fall out of the *clear* sky!"

* See Sidney Smith.

Once only; what would not the poetic faculty picture to itself, dreadful and terrible? We will come down to what *might* happen—should one's walking-stick* suddenly become a snake in the hand—even a harmless one—can we for one moment conceive of the wonderful surprise? But should it bite too—heaven defend us! The great spider of the Orinoco forests finds his trees (*his* spirits, or machinery) ready to his hand; and, in the exultation of his heart, proceeds to spin: he weaves his web, his subtile web, and anchors it firmly with his strong cables; over his work and over his work he goes—faithful and skillful he is; and when it is at last done he too rests from his labors. Visions now entrance his contented mind—the drowsy hum of life all about him invites to repose—he dreams waking dreams (one eye is at least open); dreams of the gay moth and the gilded butterfly—of the lovely visitants which may visit the house of web which he has builded. Nay, he thinks with delight of the three hundred varieties of humming-birds with flashing plumage, which have delighted his eye, or perhaps ministered to his wants. Should not they, too, visit him under the leafy bough? He tries his structure once more. "Yes, it is strong enough to hold them;" and again he retires to his quiet corner. He trusts to Providence now, for he has done *his* duty. What then comes to his net is his, who shall gainsay him? There it is; he asks no bird, no moth, no fly to come—they who come, of course come willingly—otherwise,

* See Ex. vii. 10–12.

why are they there? Right pleasant, too, it seems to him (and to his friends, with whom perhaps he divides), thus to have solved the problem, thus to eat yet not to work—he has reached the zenith of human or spider ambition: and himself at ease watches with psychological eye the last flutter of the weak trochilus—when suddenly, without warning, whew! huge and ruthless wings sweep down, the cables are snapped, the bird is gone. All is confusion—chaos is come, and his creation is ended!

Is it not asking too much of the spider that he shall forgive that hawk! Let the hawk then be wary of the spider.

After this declamation let us once again turn to our "mediums." The reader has reason to expect that both sides of this matter shall be shown him; he no doubt has confidence in his own judgment—a foolish one it may be—but he desires none the less to exercise it. Much as it may distress me, and however I may have committed myself to the genuineness of this new gospel—an honest love for what is called the truth—of history, compels me to submit the following documents. It is not likely that any very great thing can be said as to the honesty or sagacity of these witnesses (no greater than for that of those already cited); at least they can not, as I see, stand charged with a wish to plunder or deceive; nor are they already committed to a theory, mesmeric or other; anxious to sustain themselves, and so be charged with seeing what

they would wish to see; they are in the hands of the public.

A SHORT ACCOUNT *of an Interview with the Fox Family* (*Mother, Margaretta, and Katherine*) *in New York, 1st May*, 1851, *about* 8 *o'clock in the evening.*

After a number of applications, the spirits declining to manifest themselves, they at last yielded to my importunity.

I said to Mrs. F. that I was not familiar with their methods, being an inquirer anxious for the truth only, and must leave it to her to open and conduct the interview. She said it was customary to sit around a table; we drew near to one which was light, seemingly placed for this purpose, upon which stood a small japanned lamp. Mrs. F. sat at one end, the two girls at the other, I at one side.

Mrs. F.—Will the spirits hold communication with this gentleman? Very quick and repeated rolling raps on the floor under the two girls are the reply. [Curious in their character, much like what one might make by loud drumming with the ends of the fingers upon a table or sounding-board covered with cloth. They varied in force from faint to loud, rising and falling gradually, producing the effect of "moving" along the carpet under the girls.]

Mrs. F.—Has he a guardian spirit? Rap.

Mrs. F.—How many? Six raps.

Katy.—That's a good many.

I.—Wish to ask of the spirit of my friend.

Mrs. F.—Will the spirit answer? Rap.

I.—Shall I mention the name, or will the spirit give the name of the one I wish?

Mrs. F.—Either.

I.—Will the spirit spell its name? Silence.

I.—Will mention names: "John, Henry, James, Abram, David." Silence.

[Let me say here that I was exceeding careful not to indicate, by intonation or movement, any name; or afterward in writing, to rest the pencil upon any name.]

Raps are heard calling for the alphabet.

Mrs. F. calls over the letters and receives a rap at W. "Write?" Rap.

I write down the names, and receive a rap when the pencil rests on Abram when going over them the second time.

Mrs. F.—Quickly, "Was that right?"

I mention another question which I wish to ask; state that there was something unexplained in the manner of the death, which I would be glad to have made clear. Mrs. F. then calls my attention to a creaking sound apparently near the leg of the table next to which Margaretta sat.

Mrs. F.—Does that remind you of his death?

Margaretta.—It is like a ship

Katy.—It sounds like it.

I.—It certainly does, and my friend's death was in some incomprehensible way connected with the water.

Mrs. F.—Will you (to me) write on the paper names of diseases and modes of death?

I do so: fever, drowned, knocked on the head, apoplexy; placing my pencil upon each name. I receive a rap at "knocked on the head."

At this important moment, and before I have at all completed my conversation with my departed friend, the table moves a little, rising at the end where the girls sit.

Mrs. F. calls my attention to it as a "manifestation." I am, of course, surprised.

Mrs. F.—Nobody does it!

I.—Who does?

Mrs. F.—The spirits.

[I omitted to ask whether it was my friend's spirit who had thus unceremoniously closed our interview.] I state, however, that I have a question to ask of them as to this "table manifestation," when I shall have completed the other matter with my friend. A great rapping is heard, and the raps for the Alphabet; Mrs. F. asking me to write down what was spelled; which I did; being, of course, in great excitement and wonder:

Yes–we–can–hold–the–table–down.

You–was–going–to–ask–a–question?

Mrs. F.—Was that the question (to this reply) you was about to ask?

[The spirits are supposed at times to answer mental questions.]

I.—No.

Mrs. F. then proposes that we all stand up and perhaps the spirits will hold the table down. We

stand near the table (at the distance of six inches or a foot from it) and the spirits signify that they will oblige us.

I take hold and raise it without much effort, though it seems heavier than such a table should —and particularly at the end where the girls stand—not at all surprising surely, they being "mediums."

I say, "very surprising;" and look under the table with the small lamp afterward, but discover nothing strange there. The interesting family were doing me a favor by their exhibition, and I did not wish to be (or seem) suspicious and unkind. [It struck me afterward that perhaps I ought not to have lifted the table—but it was an after-thought, and I could not help what was done.]

Mrs. F.—We will now ask for the raps on the door.

The two "mediums" rise, stand near the door of the room—one holding on by the knob—when the same rolling raps are heard on the door—louder, of course, as the sound on the floor was deadened by the carpet.

Margaretta and Katy.—We do not, of course, touch the door; no one could make such sounds with their feet!

I.—Should think not.

Mrs. F.—Sometimes the sounds are heard upon the upper part of the door.

I.—Should be glad to hear them.

They are made, Mrs. F. thinks, above the girls' heads: I think them the same as before.

Mrs. F. calls my attention to faint sounds, and says they are in other parts of the room: there! and there!

I am doubtful; perhaps faintness makes them seem distant. A more distinct noise is then heard toward a part of the room, which Margaretta says is spirits' noise. Mrs. F. thinks it is only a noise in the street. I, of course, do not decide the question.

Mrs. F.—Will the spirits beat time to "Hail Columbia?" Rap.

She then chants the national air, when very pretty taps beat the time. I am much pleased. This being all which seems to be expected, I thank them kindly, ask permission to call again, and exit.

It is proper to say, that the name given of my friend was not correct; that he had no connection with a ship; and that it is quite certain that he did not die as the spirit seemed to think. As I wish to withhold nothing, I will say, that while I was writing down the answers from the spirit, one of the girls was practicing "hand-talking," in the deaf and dumb method. The "mediums," I thought, were much amused at my eagerness and readiness to believe; and two or three times were obliged to cover or turn away their faces to conceal their ridicule. Perhaps I was too easily occupied; and no one will despise them for my greenness. My own impression is, that they are very poor actors who can not command their own countenances. I learned one more fact (which to some may appear important) from one who was intimate and friendly

with them, viz.: that they were, during this winter, for several months, supported by a committee of inquiring gentlemen, who, for their kindness in the matter of the spirits, were gladly giving the young persons every advantage—of teachers—accomplishments, &c.; and thus they were not obliged to sell their wares in the market, but only displayed their gifts to satisfy real and honest inquirers.

In conclusion, let me say, that according to my judgment nothing of a preternatural or supernatural character took place; and that I was very strongly impressed with the conviction that the three women were shallow and simple cheats and tricksters, who, perhaps from an accident, had been led on by credulous people to impose upon them. (Signed,) CH. W. ELLIOTT.

Many accounts, which the writers were sure were eminently successful like the one first reprinted here, have been made public, though few of the failures have seen the light. Their family resemblance being so strong, one child may be taken as a pattern of the whole. Time fails us; and we press on for a higher flight or a deeper dive. The above communication is shocking.

THE "ROCHESTER KNOCKINGS" EXPOSED.

"PHELPS HOUSE, BUFFALO, Friday, Feb. 21.

"*To the Editors of the Tribune:*—

"Knowing that you have taken much interest in the 'Rochester Knockings,' so called, and be-

lieving that you, together with thousands of others, have been grossly deceived by certain members of the Fox family, I feel it my duty to make to you this communication. You will have noticed an article in the *Buffalo Commercial* of the 17th inst., headed 'Exposition of the Rochester Knockings,' to which my name, in company with those of Professors Flint and Coventry, is appended. I need not go over the ground there occupied, nor repeat the mode of removing by which the results were arrived at, nor describe more fully the particulars of the case of Mrs. P., who has the power of producing the same sounds, and by which the truth of our position was demonstrated. You will also have noticed in the same paper of the 18th, a 'card' from Mrs. Fish and Miss M. Fox, inviting us to test the truth of our theory, and denying the charge of their being impostors. On the evening of the 18th, we accordingly attended at their rooms, in compliance with the above invitation. Some eight or ten individuals, including three ladies, friends of Mrs. Fish and Miss F., were present, and at our request, Mr. N. Rogers, of the Phelps House, Mr. Marshall, attorney at law, and Judge Stow. The preliminaries being arranged, we asked whether the 'Spirits' would be present and communicate with us through the evening. After an interval of a minute or so, 'raps' were heard, and continued in quick succession for some time, which Mrs. Fish declared to be an affirmative answer. This was repeated, so that there would be no mistake as to the willingness on the part of the spirits

to accommodate us. This being settled, Mrs. Fish and Miss Fox were requested to be seated on chairs, their limbs extended, and their heels resting on cushions. The reasons for placing them in this position were stated, viz.: that we believed, in order that the raps should be heard, that the feet should have some solid support, serving as a *fulcrum;* else the contraction of the muscles of the leg would not throw the bone (head of tibia) out of place; or if so, no sound would be heard, unless the concussion or vibration which would be thus produced, could be communicated to some sonorous or vibrating body. While thus seated, more than fifty minutes elapsed, during which no 'raps' were heard, though the 'Spirits' were urged and called upon by Mrs. F. to 'manifest' themselves. A part of this time, Miss Fox was allowed to seat herself on the sofa, her limbs and feet resting on the cushions of the same. No sounds having been heard, it was suggested that the ladies be allowed to take any position they pleased, and see if any 'raps' were then heard. Accordingly, they seated themselves on the sofa, their feet resting on the floor, when immediately a loud succession of 'raps' followed, and continued for several minutes. We then proposed to try another test; so, seating ourselves before the ladies, we grasped each of their knees firmly, so as to prevent any lateral movement of the bones; the 'raps' immediately ceased, and were not heard while the knees were thus held, except near the close of the experiment, which continued once forty minutes, when two slight sounds

were heard on slightly relaxing my grasp, while at the same time I distinctly felt the heads of the bones grating on each other, and the muscles contracting, which, though a very positive kind of evidence to me, I am aware is not so satisfactory to bystanders.

"I should state that our hands were removed several times from the knees during the trial, and 'raps' were always heard during the interval of removal. At the close of the sitting, which continued till past 11 o'clock, Miss Fox was much affected and shed many tears, which excited much sympathy on the part of some of the gentlemen present. I need not add that our position was triumphantly sustained, and that public opinion here is now almost universally on our side.

"On the evening of the 19th, a party of ladies and gentlemen met at the house of Prof. F., when Mrs. P., the lady whom we accidentally discovered to have the power of 'rapping' in her knees, was present. During the evening, all the phenomena of the 'Rochester Knockings' were produced, the sounds being exactly similar in character and degree to those produced by the Foxes. I should state, perhaps, that the sounds are produced, not as first suggested, 'by the muscles inserted into the upper and inner side of the large bone of the leg (the tibia) near the knee-joint, being brought into action, so as to move the upper surface of the bone just named, laterally upon the lower surface of the thigh bone (the femor) giving rise to a partial lateral dislocation,' (*Commercial Advertiser*,

Feb. 17;) but the partial dislocation consists in the movement of the *tibia* outward, partly occasioned, I believe, by pressure on the foot, there being great relaxation of the ligaments about the knee-joint; but chiefly by the action of the muscles of the leg below the knee. At least, this is the fact with regard to Mrs. P., for by placing the hand on the side of the joint, the bone can be felt, at the instant the loud double rap is heard, slipping out laterally, and as suddenly slipping back again; although, by an effort of the will, it can be made to glide back noiselessly, so that only one 'rap' is heard. But this can be repeated in pretty rapid succession for a long time, although it requires evidently considerable practice to attain great skill in this new and hitherto mysterious art.

"You may very natually ask why has not this physiological phenomenon been known to physicians before? I answer that it has, so far as the smaller joints are concerned. Every person, almost, can snap their finger joints; many, also, as Mr. Burr, can snap their toe-joints, and some their ankles, producing a pretty loud 'rap' when placed in contact with some sonorous body; but the same phenomenon is very seldom met with in the larger joints, as the knees; and when it is, it has escaped particular observation, and not been made known to physicians, as it neither requires, perhaps, nor admits of medical aid.

"But it may be said by some that the above explanation is not altogether satisfactory, inasmuch as these 'rappings' are heard in different parts of

the room at the same time; or sometimes on the table, then the door, then the walls of the room, and at a distance from the 'rappers,' &c. After spending several hours a-day, for three days, with Mrs. Fish and Miss F., during which the 'raps' were invariably heard whenever called for, without, as I recollect, a single exception, I found that in no one instance did the sounds seem to proceed from the door, unless Miss F. was near enough to touch it with her heel; nor did the sounds seem to proceed from the table, unless she was near enough to the leg of the table to touch it with her foot; but generally they proceeded from the floor, apparently in her vicinity, although the floor could be felt to vibrate at some distance from her, just as the whole table would vibrate when she placed her foot against one of its legs. Much of the confusion and error on this subject arises, doubtless, from an ignorance of the laws which regulate the propagation of sounds. We should recollect that sounds may be propagated in various ways, as

"*First.* By *reciprocation*, as vibrations are excited in a sounding body, when it is capable of yielding a musical tone of definite pitch, and another body of the same pitch is made to sound near it. As examples of this, if two strings of the same length and tension be placed alongside of each other, and one of them be sounded with a violin bow, the other will be thrown into reciprocal vibration; or if the same tone be produced near the string in any other manner, as by a flute or a tuning-fork, the same effect will result. So also glass tumblers are

made to sound by a violin placed at some distance. Two watches, which do not tick alike, will soon beat in unison when placed near each other on the same table. On the same principle, sonorous bodies, as iron-blowers, pianos, &c., may be made to give forth sounds in the same room where the 'raps' are made, at some distance from them; and a gentleman of respectability informs me that he has noticed this phenomenon in the room where the ladies were exhibiting here.

Secondly. We may have vibrations of *resonance*, which occur when a sounding body is placed in connection with any other. Here one or more parts will be thrown into reciprocal vibration, even though the tone of the whole be different, or it be not capable of producing a definite tone at all. If we place a tuning-fork in vibration, upon a table or sound-board, we find that, though the whole board has no definite fundamental note, it will divide itself into a number of parts, which will reciprocate the original sound, so as greatly to increase its intensity; and the same sound-board will act equally well for tuning-forks of different degrees of pitch, although when smaller bodies are used for resonance, it is essential that there should be a relation between its fundamental note and that of the sonorous body, otherwise no distinct resonance is produced. These principles are well known to scientific musicians, and they are occasionally illustrated in rooms where these 'raps' are produced.

Third. Sounds, however, can strictly be said to be propagated only by vibrations of *conduction*, and

in this way, for the most part, are the sounds produced by the 'rappers' propagated. Thus, when Miss Fox 'raps,' her feet resting solely on the floor, the sound, in consequence of the clothes falling closely about the feet, is somewhat muffled, and the vibrations being propagated to the floor in every direction, it is almost impossible to decide where they are most intense. Those having a nice musical ear, can generally locate them directly in her vicinity; but if the attention is drawn to another part of the room, then, as in the case of ventriloquism, the sound seems to proceed thence. This power of distinguishing the *direction* of sounds, it is well known, is chiefly acquired by habit, and varies exceedingly in different individuals. Thus, when these 'raps' have been heard, I have often known them to be located in different parts of the room by different persons present. We judge of the *direction* of sound chiefly, if not altogether, by the relative intensity of the impressions produced by the two ears respectively.

"If the sounds, then, be produced under circumstances where the same impression is made on both ears, or auditory nerves, then we are wholly unable to designate from what quarter they come. This often happens in a small room, where there are many vibrating bodies, when these muffled 'raps' are heard, although we have generally been able, by close attention, to locate them in the vicinity of Miss Fox. So, also, our idea of the *distance* of a sound is altogether an acquired perception, depending principally on the loudness or faint-

ness of the sound, if we have no other indications to guide us. When we are entirely ignorant *how* a certain sound is produced, and how intense it might be expected to be, we have no means of judging of the distance of the sonorous body from us, and we may suppose that a sound proceeds from a remote part of the house, when it is actually located a few feet distant only. A shrill railroad-whistle, made several miles off, appears to be quite near to us, while a dull sound appears remote, although made in our immediate vicinity. These principles, which are often overlooked or unknown, will serve, I believe, to explain all the varieties and phenomena of sounds connected with the 'Rochester Rappings,' and to reconcile the various clashing opinions which have been made with regard to their location, &c.

"I hope I need make no apology for this communication, which is solely for the purpose of subserving the interests of truth, by clearing up a mystery which has thus far baffled many inquirers, and which has been productive of much evil in the community.

"I am, very respectfully, yours,

"CHARLES H. LEE, M.D."

It will be satisfactory to many, who having "made up their minds," can not be at the cost of changing, to know that the inspired "mediums" deny the truth of all this—"declare that the rapping is superhuman,"* and have so impressed the

* See Authorized Edition, p. 48.

editor of the *New-York Merchant's Day-book*, that he says, "We must acquit the girls of any attempt to impose upon the public—in truth they are the most imposed upon by the public; and when we see published statements of their trickery and deception, we do not hesitate to pronounce the authors of them liars." Should the editor visit Buffalo, and call upon Dr. Lee, they can easily settle this matter by stepping over into Canada, and at a small expense.

It is evident that it is among the most difficult things to check an inspiration or flow of this kind, when once it has found channels or conduits. The following testimony, published in the New-York Herald, has had but little if any effect upon the "mediums."

DEPOSITION OF MRS. NORMAN CULVER.*

"I am, by marriage, a connection of the Fox girls; their brother married my husband's sister. The girls have been a great deal at my house, and for about two years I was a very sincere believer in the rappings; but some things which I saw when I was visiting the girls at Rochester, made me suspect that they were deceiving. I resolved to satisfy myself in some way; and some time afterwards I made a proposition to Catherine to assist her in producing the manifestations. I had a cousin visiting me from Michigan, who was going to consult the spirits, and I told Catherine that if they intended to go to Detroit, it would be a

* Taken at Arcadia, New York, April 17, 1851.

great thing for them to convince him; I also told her that if I could do any thing to help her, I would do it cheerfully—that I should probably be able to answer all the questions he would ask, and I would do it if she would show me how to make the raps. She said that as Margaretta was absent, she wanted somebody to help her, and that if I would become a medium, she would explain it all to me. She said that when my cousin consulted the spirits, I must sit next to her, and touch her arm when the right letter was called. I did so, and was able to answer nearly all the questions correctly. After I had helped her in this way, a few times, she revealed to me the secret. The raps are produced with the toes. All the toes are used. After nearly a week's practice, with Catherine showing me how, I could produce them perfectly myself. At first it was very hard work to do it. Catherine told me to warm my feet, or put them in warm water, and it would then be easier work to rap; she said that she sometimes had to warm her feet three or four times in the course of an evening. I found that heating my feet did enable me to rap a great deal easier. I have sometimes produced a hundred and fifty raps in succession. I can rap with all the toes on both feet; it is most difficult to rap with the great toe.

"Catherine told me how to manage to answer the questions. She said it was generally easy enough to answer right if the one who asked the questions called the alphabet. She said the reason why they asked people to write down several

names on paper, and then point to them till the spirit rapped at the right one, was to give them a chance to watch the countenance and motions of the person; and that in that way they could nearly always guess right. She also explained how they held down and moved tables. (Mrs. Culver gave us some illustrations of the tricks.) She told me that all I should have to do to make the raps heard on the table would be to put my foot on the bottom of the table when I rapped, and that when I wished to make the raps sound distant on the wall, I must make them louder, and direct my own eyes earnestly to the spot where I wished them to be heard. She said if I could put my foot against the bottom of the door the raps would be heard on the top of the door. Catherine told me that when the committee held their ankles in Rochester, the Dutch servant girl rapped with her knuckles, under the floor from the cellar. The girl was instructed to rap whenever she heard their voices calling the spirits. Catherine also showed me how they made the sounds of sawing and planing boards. (The whole trick was explained to us.) When I was at Rochester, last January, Margaretta told me that when people insisted on seeing her feet and toes she could produce a few raps with her knee and ankle.

"Elizabeth Fish (Mrs. Fish's daughter), who now lives with her father, was the first one who produced these raps. She accidentally discovered the way to make them, by playing with her toes against the foot-board while in bed. Catherine

told me that the reason why Elizabeth went away west to live with her father, was because she was too conscientious to become a medium. The whole secret was revealed to me, with the understanding that I should practice as a medium when the girls were away. Catherine said that whenever I practiced I had better have my little girl at the table with me, and make folks believe that she was the medium, for she said that they would not suspect so young a child of any tricks. After I had obtained the whole secret, I plainly told Catherine that my only object was to find out how these tricks were done, and that I should never go any farther in this imposition. She was very much frightened, and said she believed that I meant to tell of it, and expose them; and if I did, she would swear it was a lie. She was so nervous and excited that I had to sleep with her that night. When she was instructing me how to be a medium, she told me how frightened they used to get in New York, for fear somebody would detect them, and gave me the whole history of all the tricks they played upon the people there. She said that once Margaretta spoke aloud, and the whole party believed it was a spirit.

"MRS. NORMAN CULVER."

"We hereby certify that Mrs. Culver is one of the most reputable and intelligent ladies in the town of Arcadia. We were present when she made the disclosures contained in the above paper; we had heard the same from her before, and we

cheerfully bear testimony that there can not be the slightest doubt of the truth of the whole statement.

"C. G. POMEROY, M.D.
"REV. D. S. CHASE."

The following short notice, which lately came to hand, may go for what it is worth:—

"*The Rappers Tested.*—We find in the Cincinnati Gazette of the 4th, the report of a joint Committee of gentlemen and ladies—among the latter, Mrs. Judge McLean, and Mrs. S. P. Chase—appointed to investigate the mystery of the rappings as exhibited through two members of the Fox family. The committee, after being present at two or three sittings, and watching the whole operations as closely as possible, state that they never heard a sound when all the feet of the mediums were in sight, with their soles on the surface of the floor."

Probably no one now living has been an eye-witness of the Elusinian or other religious mysteries of Egypt, Greece or Rome (I say probably, because it is but fair in the consideration of these strange matters to provide for the unexpected coming of the Wandering Jew). Unsatiated, therefore, with high-spiced cookery, the reader will more readily eat what is now to be set before him. There would seem to be, from the following account, certain high tides in the affairs of spirits—certain gala-nights when, in a humor of uncommon jolliness, they indulge in what may—to borrow a cant word—be called an "outpouring," such as this. [Let not the reader weary; this, it is to be hoped, is the last.]

"New York, 25th May, 1851.

"You ask me to give you some account of our *spiritual* experience on Wednesday evening last, when we went by invitation to the Partridges'. If I were to enter into all the particulars of what occurred, it would consume much more time and paper than I think it worth; but if I can manage to condense the more important matters into a small compass, so as to give you some idea of the proceedings, I suppose that will do. Although we were regularly invited, as we thought by our *own* spirit, we found on our arrival some twenty persons or more assembled, including the family, among whom were Dr. Gray and wife and Judge Edmonds, and from all I observed in the course of the evening, every one of these, with the exception of C. and myself, were profound believers in the phenomena. There were also two *mediums* from Springfield, Mass., young men of about twenty years of age. There was evidently preparation for a great time, and I felt extremely sorry that you should lose so excellent an opportunity to witness the proceedings. As usual, a circle was formed; but, from the number being too great to sit round the table, we made a continuous circle all round the room. As soon as this was done, the rappings commenced—always *under* or *about* the mediums—the sounds which proceeded from the young man were different, louder and more distinct, *as if not smothered by petticoats.* He was a most peculiar and unwholesome-looking individ-

ual, with hair nearly white, a restless eye, and a nervous and flurried manner; he indulged in strange starts and jerks, and we were told added the gift of clairvoyance to his other spiritual endowments. I speak of but one of the young men because he was evidently the active partner in the concern, the other appeared to be his magnetizer, and only professed to be partly a medium. In the course of the evening, the white-haired medium, as we called him, took occasion to fall into a magnetic trance: his eyes were bandaged, and he then proceeded to act as interpreter or mouth-piece for the spirits, by whom he said he was surrounded; after various theatrical starts, jerks, and curious snortings and sniffings, interspersed with a sort of humming noise in his chest, he gave utterance to many sentences of the same tenor as most of those we hear and read about, gathered, as I imagine, from the Swedenborgian writings, such as "old theological systems and superstitions must be done away," "priests and demagogues must give way before the pure influx of the Holy Spirit," and much more which I can not remember. He also conveyed messages to the Partridges' from their friends, and went through with various performances which strongly impressed me with a sense of humbug. He then (still asleep) came to the table, and wrote with a pencil, other answers to questions, the spirits being supposed to guide his hand, though why they should take this trouble when they could speak through his mouth, I could not understand. His eyes were still bandaged, but not so carefully

that he could not see from under the band. After this the spirits desired the lights put out, and every vestige and gleam of light being excluded, in the most pitchy darkness, a series of proceedings took place, which utterly and entirely disgusted me; of course any thing done in the dark is useless, so far as convincing people goes. We sat and listened for about one hour and a half, to a perfect pandemonium of noises, bangs on the table as loud as could be made by the hand or foot, loud slaps, bells ringing loudly, the table creaking, flapping its leaves and turning quite upside down, as was announced by the exclamations of those about it: Judge Edmonds continually exclaiming, "I'm touched—now I am tapped on the shoulder—hear that—now they are at my feet, now my head," and then he would cry out, "They are pulling my coat-tails—they are pulling me toward Margaretta," at which C. and I pinched each other instinctively. Meantime the white-haired was going on in the most extraordinary manner, crying out, seemingly scuffling and contending with spirits who wanted to take possession of him. At one time, Dr. Gray says, "They have lifted him up in the air," and some one else rejoined, "No, he is standing on his chair;" at length, amid a loud outcry, and exclamations of "Don't, I don't want to, leave me alone," accompanied by the noise of a struggle, he was dragged into the closet, and shut up there; this we knew from Dr. Gray's exclamations. Presently Dr. Gray was also sent in there, then Judge Edmonds, finally all the mediums and some others. We

were then favored with the most absurd series of noises from this closet that ever was heard: loud bangings, a chorus of Auld Lang Syne, sung by all the *closetees*, accompanied by raps on the door, and scrapings on an old violincello, which was in the closet, violent ringing of bells, which were afterward hurled out into the room, and then rang all around a sort of accompaniment to the music in the closet; 'all this and more could I rehearse,' but I think you will by this time have had enough, as we had, for at this crisis we adjourned to the entry, and waited patiently for the orgies to cease—the air having become close and stifling in the room. I leave you to imagine what it must have been in the closet. We left them at last at half-past eleven still in there, the noises going on as loud and meaningless as ever. I shall not hold forth as usual, except to tell you that the twelve good rules are fairly commenced, and that I am your most obedient."

So much for this observer.

The end is not yet. "All things come to an end," is a saying which can be questioned, if not denied. Might one not rather say nothing ever does come to an end? No thing, either good or bad, but what after a sort lives forever in its results. That *this* marvel is ended, the most skeptical will not need to assert, due regard being given to the following notice in the New-York Evening Post.

"There is to be a convention of the spiritual rappers at Rochester, in February next. When so many get together the least that they can do is to knock up an earthquake."

Ended! Is the *race* exhausted—is man then about to drop, like the ripened apple? Do not believers die or disappear, and yet new and newer rise up in their places? Great is the faculty of belief, great its needs; something it demands—will have. Did not Rachel steal her father Laban's gods,* having a craving for something in which she *could* believe? Have we not, almost within our own day, seen a great nation worshiping "goddesses of Reason, with teeth a little decayed?"† In this day we too insist upon some sort of a belief, "living" faith; in one way or another we will have it. One is safe, too, having examined with the utmost earnestness, in being able to state in a positive manner, that the "Ages of Faith" have *not* disappeared, dim in the past. By no means let us admit that, whatever we may admit as to the superiority or the contrary of these new gospels. Young children may yet see in full bourgeon, a new society of "SANFEDESTI," or HOLY FAITHITES,‡ who, standing upon the platform already indicated by the "manifestations," if they can find

* See Genesis xxxi. 19.

† Carlyle, French Revolution.

‡ This is a secret association, well organized, like freemasonry, carbonarism, &c.; but having for its object the maintenance of priestcraft and kingcraft, instead of, &c.—*See Forbes's Lectures on Italy*, N. Y. 1851.

no better, shall lead down souls to hell, or up to heaven. In the mean time, let us, while waiting, stand upon this, *that truth is, and the God of truth,* and having done all, STAND.

The Stratford Mysteries.

If the reader has never been in Stratford, he or she must try to picture to himself or herself a quiet, elegant country town, with its broad and beautiful streets bordered with spacious and modest houses, shadowy with spreading elms: a quiet, elegant place, where any one might desire to go and lay his drowsy head for the remnant of his years, provided that his *work* is done, or that idleness be to him, Heaven. But idleness is not heaven's law, and it seems that those who fancy that life can go on without constant and hopeful work, will make a sad mistake. But in this peaceful Stratford there are such souls, and it may well be a matter of curious speculation, why their repose should have been disturbed rather than another? Stratford, however (lying along Long Island Sound), was the chosen place for the strange manifestations now about to be spread before the reader. Stratford has become famous in the psychological history of the nineteenth century; and her peaceful streets have been visited by strange spirits both in the body and out of the body, as it is said—spirits which no man can apparently number.

In a modest, yet elegant house, on one of these shady streets, on the 10th of March, 1850, on a Sunday, the spiritual visitants began their work. Nobody was about; the stillness of Stratford was doubly still on this particular Sabbath; and it seemed as if an insult was in some way added to injury—provided these things shall prove to be the work of Satan—in that, not content with mischief, it must be perpetrated on the Lord's-Day rather than on one of man's; who has, as all know, six to the Lord's one. Persons of vivid imagination can fancy the surprise of the Rev. Mr. Phelps (D.D.), upon his return from church, at finding such remarkable evidences of spiritual existences (respecting which, and kindred subjects, his mind was first engaged in 1842, now eight years) then spread before him in his quiet home. Sympathetic natures can comprehend faintly the start which must have been communicated to all Stratford's open-minded inhabitants, as the news of this spiritual visitation went swiftly from tongue to tongue;—how some may have scoffed, though many believed; how one's nerves would have thrilled at any peculiar noise, not knowing what *it* might prelude; how susceptible persons took care not to be out alone at night; how children drew the blankets over their heads, and "waked themselves to sleep."

"A strip of black crape on the knob;" locked doors "unlocked and opened;" "furniture strewn about the rooms," and heaped up; while in the upper chamber there appear to have been "figures

or images to the number of eight, found in a kneeling posture, and before each was a Bible opened, and passages marked with bits of paper—passages referring to spirits." Thus, tells H. B. Taylor, in a letter,* which it is not necessary to reprint, because it says only upon hearsay. Manifestations enough these were, for a quiet family; and one can not tell whether an anxious investigator into spiritual matters would have been most pleased or displeased, at this method of removing his doubts. No one can do better at the outset than to read over Dr. Phelps's own account, which first appeared in the *New York Observer*, a weekly paper called religious:

"*To the Editors of the New York Observer:*—

"Messrs. Editors:—Public attention has been called of late to certain strange manifestations which have been denominated 'Mysterious Knockings.' They first began to attract attention in the city of Rochester, between two and three years ago. Since that time, similar manifestations have been in the cities of Auburn, Syracuse, and in other places in Western New York, and recently in several places in Ohio, New Jersey, Connecticut and Massachusetts. For several weeks past, something of the same character has been witnessed at my house. It commenced on the 10th of March last, and continued with slight interruptions, from two to three months. For the first five or six weeks, no communications were

* See *New Haven Journal and Courier*, April 19, 1850.

made that we could understand; but the phenomena consisted in the moving of articles of furniture in a manner that could not be accounted for. Knives, forks, spoons, nails, blocks of wood, &c., were thrown in different directions about the house. They were seen to move from places and in directions which made it certain that no visible power existed by which the motion could be produced. For days and weeks together, I watched these strange movements with all the care and caution and close attention which I could bestow. I witnessed them hundreds and hundreds of times, and I know that in hundreds of instances they took place when there was no visible power by which the motion could have been produced. Scores of persons of the first standing in the community, whose education, general intelligence, candor, veracity, and sound judgment, none will question, were requested to witness the phenomena, and, if possible, help us to a solution of the mystery. But as yet no solution has been obtained. The idea that the whole was a 'trick of the children'—an idea which some of the papers have endeavored with great zeal to promulgate, is to every one who is acquainted with the facts, as stupid as it is false and injurious. The statement, too, which some of the papers have reiterated so often that 'the mystery was found out,' is, I regret to say, untrue. With the most thorough investigation which I have been able to bestow upon it, aided by gentlemen of the best talents, intelligence and sound judgment, in this,

and in many neighboring towns, the cause of this strange phenomena remains yet undiscovered.

"About the middle of April, a gentleman who was spending the night at my house, proposed to try the method of interrogation which had been adopted in Western New York, and to our utter amazement, a series of responses were returned, from which the inference was irresistible, that they must have been produced by a being which possessed intelligence. For several weeks communications were made in this way relating almost wholly to a matter in which certain members of the family are supposed to have an interest; at the same time the other manifestations continued, and very great annoyance was experienced. The mode of communication was made by some persons repeating the alphabet, and the letters of the word to be uttered were indicated by a rap from some invisible agent. I tried by all the means I could devise, to find what the power was by which the rapping was produced. I have heard it hundreds of times, and have done my best to ascertain the cause; but as yet I have not succeeded. I have been often asked if I believed it was the work of spirits. I have as often replied that I did not know what it is. I have never seen a spirit, and I do not know what a spirit could do if it would, or what it would do if it could. The facts, however, are of such a nature, and have transpired under such circumstances, as to render the idea of trick or designed deception wholly inadmissible. Still, however, I have become fully satisfied that

no reliance whatever is to be placed on these communications, either as a source of valuable information, or as a means of acquiring truth. I speak of what has transpired at my house, and I have the fullest confidence that if it is the work of spirits, it is the work of *wicked spirits*. Indeed they *profess* to be wicked spirits in a state of torment, seeking a mitigation of their torment, by redressing the wrongs of which they were guilty in life. I have watched the progress of this matter with great care, and have done the best in my power to learn what these strange things mean; and although I have not been able to ascertain the cause, I am satisfied that their communications are wholly worthless. They are often contradictory — often prove false — frequently trifling, and nonsensical, and more in character with what might be expected of a company of loafers on a spree, than with what might be expected from spirits returned from the world of retribution, to 'tell the secrets of their prison-house.'

"Similar manifestations are now being made in many other parts of the country. According to information which I suppose to be authentic, they are witnessed in from one hundred and fifty to two hundred* different places at the present time. In many of these places, they are said to advance ideas on the doctrines of religion, wholly at variance with the teachings of the Bible, and subversive of many essential truths which the Bible reveals. Under an impression that whatever is com-

* Over-estimated ?

municated by a spirit must of course be true, many persons are receiving these communications as the truth of God—as a new revelation from the spirit world. But it should be remembered that there is no proof that what purports to be a revelation from spirits, is the work of *spirits* at all. The most that can be said is, that we do not yet *know* how or by whom these communications are made. If they are made by spirits, we have no proof that they are *good* spirits. The presumption is, that they are *bad* spirits—lying spirits. At my house they often accused each other of lying—contradicted at one time what they affirmed at another—inflicted injury on property in the most wanton manner, and have given throughout conclusive evidence that the discipline of hell, which they profess to have experienced for several years, has as yet been wholly ineffectual in improving their characters, and qualifying them for the 'higher sphere,' for which many suppose that the discipline after death is a preparation.

"I can not now say to what conclusions future developments may lead me; but my present impression is, that the whole thing, so far as the transactions in this place are concerned, is to be set down among those devices of Satan, by which he is promoting his work of destroying souls; and my chief object in this communication to the public at this time is, to caution all who would avoid error, against trusting to these pretended revelations. I have had a better opportunity than most men to witness them and to judge of their claims,

and I have full confidence that the opinions I have expressed will be found to be correct. I will merely add, that for some weeks past these annoyances at my house have been subsiding, and now, as I hope, have ceased altogether.

"Yours, respectfully,

"ELIAKIM PHELPS."

"STRATFORD, June 20, 1850."

Dr. Phelps seems to state the case fairly, as he then saw it; and it is a source of consolation to some that he takes the view of the revelations and doings that he does, for, as they well say, what would become of our holy faith, the trinity, Satan, death, and hell, should we give heed to these revelations as being truth? There are others more firm, who say that the truth is still the same, even if it should be denied by spirits themselves; because the truth is from God, and man's agreement or disagreement is important to him but not to the truth.

The cry of humbug will not do in this case, for it settles no one's doubts;—not even if it were the head humbug himself should we so treat him, as merely to clamor him down. No, let us have a free look at him with our own open eyes, and not through the spectacles of another one, or the mist and fog of our own fears. Not even if Satan himself, horns, hoofs, bad smell and all should appear, ought we to run. No, let us rather stand up, see with our own eyes, and smell with our own noses, explain what is explicable, and ponder the strange—

not forgetting that fear is the foe of faith, and credulity and superstition are twin children of foul and cruel unbelief.

We travel on the great highway of truth, swiftly when we can, slowly when we must. We also wander in shady lanes, and follow the winding sheep walks, being sure always that he who, in honest sincerity, seeks, finds, and that all lies not upon any one track. Now, we propose to buckle on our spiritual skates, so to speak, and, skimming as swiftly as we may over the thin and doubtful rind which overlies Nowhere, see what we shall of that shadowy region, out of which, from time to time, stream up these fitful and portentous lights, frightful to some, curious to all. Careful persons, no doubt, may suggest that, drawn on by that great magnetic power, we may reach into its irresistible influence, and, perhaps, when it is too late, find ourselves glued fast to the great loadstone. Should such be the case, and we find the climate uncomfortable, we can at least unbuckle our skates, and walk back as we best may.

We will dismiss some few of the more unimportant witnesses rapidly.

"Veritas," in New Haven Journal, Sept. 1850, says he *saw* "pepper-box," "iron-stand," "clothes'-pin," "peach-stone," (which he did not save) "apple-core," (which he did save) "queen's cake-cup," and "two apples," thrown; "and these are the principal facts which occurred during my visit to Stratford."

H. B. Taylor, who does not say what he *saw*,

reports what he believed was done. Among the rest, his son, (Dr. P.'s) about eleven years of age, was lifted up as if by a man, carried across the room, and set down again, luckily for him. "His pantaloons, cut into strips, were tied to his chair!" "His boots were missing at church time;" "and his cap." "The doctor's hat was whirled up, &c." "Characters and hieroglyphics were written, and the word 'Selah' upon the front stoop."

A more remarkable instance of transportation is on record than the one mentioned by Mr. T.

"As soon as I read your letter of May 24, (1694?) I called to mind a story which I heard long ago, concerning one of the Lord Duffis (in the shire of Murray) his predecessors, of whom it is reported that upon a time, when he was walking abroad in the fields near to his own house, he was suddenly carried away, and found the next day at Paris, in the French king's cellar, with a silver cup in his hand! To be sure the present Lord Duffis 'thinks it fabulous.' But—and strange it is—there is yet an old silver cup in his lordship's possession still, which is called the *Fairy Cup*."*

Let us dismiss T., and listen to other voices. And first comes the result of Dr. Phelps's conversation with the writer, which is here printed as corrected by Dr. Phelps himself.

By the mouths of two witnesses, perchance this thing, too, may be established—thus:

In a conversation had with Dr. Phelps at Strat-

* Aubrey's Miscellanies, Lond.

ford, Aug. 21, 1851, I gained the following information:—

1. I learned that Doctor P. had not expressed an opinion, that the manifestations made in his house were produced by physical rather than spiritual influences; but that so far as he had an opinion, it was that the facts were inexplicable upon known experience of natural laws.

2. I learned that the first demonstrations were made on a Sunday, 10th March, 1850; and in various ways were continued, with an occasional cessation of a few days, till the 1st October; that the manifestations were more frequent in connection with a lad of about eleven; that the noises, &c. were most violent when the whole family were present, as in sitting around the table; that the rappings and other manifestations were less frequent and feebler when but one of the children was in the house; that the manifestations did not follow them to Pennsylvania, to which place they, with their mother, removed 1st Oct.; that he, the Dr., remained in the house in S. five weeks after they left, and experienced no disturbance; that none ensued upon the return of the family in the Spring of 1851, and that none had since been felt. The Dr. explained that he now kept the two children separated, that the boy was now away, as a precautionary measure, fearing that his presence would occasion a recurrence. I also learned that the health of the children had not suffered, though at first subject to fright, and that the "rappings" made at his house did, in many respects, resemble

those made by the Rochester spirits, of the reality and singularity of which he had no question, and that they were not made by *human* agency.

3. I learned that of the accounts published to be relied on, were Dr. P.'s two letters, one in N. Y. Obs., July,* and the other in Boston Transcript for Nov. 6; Webster's letters, in New Haven Journal, and the accounts given by the editor of the N. Y. Sun and Derby Journal, though of course but a small number of the occurrences are given.

4. I learned that the injury (pecuniary) was perhaps from $100 to $200, consisting mostly of breakage of glass, furniture, &c.; that the spiritual revelations were valueless; that the spiritual characters *written* were incomprehensible to him though plain enough to A. J. Davis, as he said, when in his "superior condition," and to others in that magnetic state; that they did not resemble the heavenly writing given by Prof. Bush in his book "Swedenborg and Mesmer," which book, with some others relating to these singular matters, he had in his house; that upon a comparison of the two writings, the likeness was not greater than between Hebrew and Arabic; that after a little, the writings were made in our character, upon coarse paper from his closet, and were scrawling and incoherent like to one shown me.

5. I learned that in Doctor P.'s opinion, Mr.

* Ante, p. 173.

Davis's explanation by means of the mesmeric state of the two children,* does not meet or provide for a large number of facts, perhaps the larger; and that no explanation that has yet been attempted, and no facts, that have yet transpired, contribute in the least to remove the impenetrable mystery in which the whole subject is involved; and also that in the truthfulness of the revelations he places no reliance at all.

We now come to "W.'s" letters in the *New Haven Journal and Courier*. Statements which Dr. P. says can be relied on; two of these letters are presented in full; the third, consisting of speculations, is not here important. It is much to be regretted that "W." does not often say, "*I saw*:" "were seen"—"were found," &c., are not entirely conclusive to a careful inquirer thirsting for the truth:

THE STRATFORD MYSTERIES—CHAPEL SCENE.

"MESSRS. EDITORS:—I promised an account of one more of the extraordinary occurrences connected with the Stratford mysteries, and now give you an outline of it. As I was not an eye-witness, and must give it upon the authority of one well known in this community, and whose testimony is most reliable, my account of it will lose much of the vividly impressive manner of the relater, and be curtailed of many of the interesting circumstances attending it. It is called the Chapel

* See Phil. of Spiritual Intercourse.

Scene because it seemed to represent a Roman Catholic religious service.

"While the house of Dr. Phelps was undergoing a rigid examination from cellar to attic, one of the chambers was mysteriously fitted up with eleven figures of angelic beauty, gracefully and imposingly arranged, so as to have the appearance of life. They were all female figures but one, and most of them in attitudes of devotion, with Bibles before them, and pointing to different passages with the apparent design of making the Scriptures sanction and confirm the strange things that were going on. For example, the ninth verse of the second chapter of Joel was pointed out: 'They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall; they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief.' If this passage had been dictated in express reference to the Stratford *visitations*, it could hardly have been more appropriate. Some of these figures were kneeling beside the beds, and some bending their faces to the floor in attitudes of deep humility. In the center of the group was a dwarf most grotesquely arrayed; and above, was a figure so suspended as to seem flying through the air. These manifestations occurred sometimes when the room was locked, and sometimes when it was known that no persons had been there. Measures were taken to have a special scrutiny in regard to every person who entered the room that day, and it is known with the most perfect certainty that many of these figures

were constructed when there were no persons in the room and no visible power by which they could have been produced. The *tout ensemble* was most beautiful and picturesque, and had a grace and ease and speaking effect that seemed the attributes of a higher creation. One figure was composed of a dress of Mrs. P.'s. It was in a kneeling posture, with so much resemblance of real life that a little boy of three years old on seeing it, whispered to his little sister and said, 'Ma is saying prayers.' The entire display was most varied in its character, and composed of materials for which the whole house must have been ransacked. A clock was brought from an adjoining room and placed upon the floor without disturbing its mechanical action. A portable desk was taken from a secretary and laid on the floor, an open Bible laid upon it, and a small child-like figure kneeling before it. This scene was witnessed by several persons besides the family—three of them professional gentlemen of public education, whose character for sound judgment and acute penetration forbids in the most emphatic manner, an idea of trickery or deception in any possible way. It was 'got up,' too, in most mysterious stillness and rapidity. No three women could have done it in as many hours—much less without attracting attention and exciting suspicion by their rapid movements and more active tongues—and all this while every eye and ear were open to discover the agencies by which these disturbances were caused,

and every ingenuity set to work to detect the trickery of the whole.

"Similar figures have been constructed at different times since. In all, not less than thirty. In one instance, a lady's riding-habit was fitted up with a hat and plumes and other appropriate articles, and placed on the side of a bed to represent a lady on horseback, and the justness of the imitation was most ludicrous. This riding-habit, it may be remarked, was the article out of which a New York editor made so large a figure some time ago. He says that 'hard substances were found sewed up in the young lady's dress.' The 'hard substances' were small shot 'sewed up' in the lower hem of the riding-dress to keep it in its appropriate position when the lady is on horseback;—a specimen of the misrepresentations by which the feelings of that abused and suffering family have been outraged, and the sensibilities of an amiable and artless young lady trifled with in a way that has twice brought her to a sick bed. I feel indignant when I listen to the recital of the wrongs which this afflicted family have suffered.

"Now, Messrs. Editors, that the public should be even contemptuously skeptical about these things, is not surprising. It is contrary to our experience and our philosophy. But we beg those friends of ours who are in no mood to admit either facts or philosophy in the case, not to say that my clerical friends and myself, whose curiosity led us to the *enchanted* house, are converts to the belief in supernatural visitations. This as-

sumption is gratuitous. All that we know of the matter, or believe, and all that we feel called upon to state, is, *that such things are*, and that to us they are unaccountable. If the agitation of this subject is mischievous to the public mind, unsettling and confounding the weak, and encouraging the idea of new revelations of the spiritual world, we feel that the responsibility is not ours—we have no such faith.

"But there are two classes of witnesses to the truth or falsity of these things. The first are those who have seen and heard, and who, by their intelligence and worth, are competent to testify to what they see and know. The second are the outsiders, whose dignity might be compromised by participating in investigation, and whose incredulity would stamp the seal of falsehood on the testimony of the most truthful and sagacious men, and who, indeed, would not *believe* even if they *saw*. Such have a right to their own theory and belief, and if they think they can explain these phenomena as the results of *trickery* and *collusion*, they may perhaps satisfy themselves; but to us who have seen and heard, what was a mystery at first is still a mystery, and to the hourly repeated question, 'What is it?' we have the only answer that echo gives, 'What is it?' W."

STRATFORD MYSTERIES ONCE MORE.

"MESSRS. EDITORS:—So many wishes have been expressed that I should give a fuller statement than was made in a joint communication

from my clerical friends and myself in your paper of the 25th, of the mysterious phenomena that came under our observation during a recent visit to Stratford, that in spite of the cry of '*humbug and collusion*,' words that come more gracefully from the mouth of a fool than from the lips of the philosopher, I am induced to present the following *facts*. To some of these we ourselves were witnesses. For others, we have the testimony of gentlemen on whose authority the fullest reliance may be placed, and whose veracity we should no sooner question than we should doubt the evidence of our own senses.

"The first circumstance I state on the evidence of Dr. Phelps himself, a gentleman whose age, and independence, and relation to society and the church, place him far above suspicion. Just before our arrival at his beautiful residence, the Dr. had been writing at a table, and had turned from it a moment for some purpose. On resuming his position to write again, he found upon the table a half-sheet of paper which he had just left untouched and unsoiled, covered with a strange-looking specimen of chirography, and the ink still wet. He was the only occupant of that room, and how the writing could have been placed there in the brief space of time his back was turned, is unaccountable. This is but one instance in a dozen of similar character. Articles of every kind were thrown about the room in admirable confusion, and from positions which forbid the supposition that they were thrown by any member of his

family—and the supposition that they could have been thrown by any one concealed in some unseen corner involves more difficulty than to believe all this the result of superhuman agency. Fifty-six articles were at one time picked up which had been hurled at some devoted head, and one of them a brickbat which was seen to start from the surface of a large mirror and come violently to the floor. Letters were seen to drop from the ceiling, and vegetable substances covered with hieroglyphics to emerge from the very figures upon the carpet to which the eye was at the moment directed. Valuable manuscripts, which were entire on the morning of our arrival, and which contained the records of all the strange occurrences of the last six months, were found destroyed, and our first intimation of the unwelcome fact came from the 'spirit' himself. Since our return, I learn from one of the family that other papers relating to these 'spiritual communications' were found in a drawer on fire, and little besides their ashes left to prove their previous existence.

"While we were there, the contents of the pantry were emptied into the kitchen, and bags of salt, tin ware, and heavier culinary articles were thrown in a promiscuous heap upon the floor with a loud and startling noise. Loaves of delicious cake were scattered about the house, and articles of clothing removed from closets and drawers in spite of bolts and locks, and found lying in unwonted places, and sometimes divested of their choicest ornaments. The large knocker of the outside-door

would thunder its fearful tones through the loud-resounding hall, unmindful of the vain but rigid scrutiny to which it was subjected by incredulous and curious men, and continue its unearthly 'rappings' in spite of the most abusive skepticism. Chairs would deliberately move across the room, unimpelled by any visible agency. Heavy marble-top tables would poise themselves upon two legs and then fall with their contents to the floor, no human being within six feet of them. Missiles of various kinds would seem to start from space and dash through costly panes of glass. Silver spoons and forks would be doubled up in a moment like so much straw, and sometimes hurled at the head of the unconscious guest.

"Such are a few of the thousand and one fantastic tricks of the 'spirit' rogues of this ill-fated house; tricks that outrival the far-famed feats of East Indian jugglery. But I have one more to relate at another time, and more marvelous still. I shall give them on the authority of one of the witnesses, a person most favorably known in this community, as combining all the excellences of the Christian, with the refinement and intelligence of the gentleman and scholar.

"Now, Messrs. Editors, that these things are so, is proved by multitudes of witnesses. But what do they mean, and how can they be accounted for? No one who visits the house and remains long enough to witness one half the strange occurrences of a single day, will believe that this amiable family connive at, or for a moment sanc-

tion them. Besides the absence of any apparent motive for desiring so unenviable a notoriety, they are suffering, and most unjustly suffering in reputation, feeling, person and property—subject to annoying visits from the idle and curious, losing the services of their domestics, and seriously diminishing life's sweetest charm, their social and domestic happiness. Having enjoyed their elegant hospitality for near forty-eight hours, we feel that we could do no less than to give our *unsolicited testimony* to their cheerful courtesy and Christian truthfulness, and express our sincere conviction that the imputations under which they have suffered are as illiberal and unjust on the part of those who urge them, as they are mortifying and painful to the unfortunate family who are made their victims. W."

The reader must be patient, and read on.

Extracts from the account of Mr. Beach, New-York Sun, April 29, 1850.*

"While our conversation was quietly proceeding, there seemed to be a general start of all present, the boy instantaneously sitting up in bed. I was then looking at the carpet, on a line parallel to the front side of the bed, and of the mantle-piece, when I caught sight of a match-box, about four inches long by three wide, within an inch of the floor, if not upon it. I heard a noise corres-

* There were present Dr. and Mrs. Phelps, daughter and son (the son in bed), a lady, and Mr. B.

ponding to what would be expected from a heavy iron box of that size, falling from about the height of the mantle-piece—and at the same time saw the box slide toward the bed, and directly away from the mantle-piece about four inches, while the lid flew open, and some matches bounded out upon the floor. The boy denied any agency in the matter, with an expression of innocence that defied the closest scrutiny. The next morning I was surprised to find the box was made of tin, and I made several experiments (unsuccessful), to see if I could produce such a sound from it as I had heard the previous evening.

"A few moments after that event, and while all present occupied their former positions, the boy sat up in his bed as suddenly as before, exclaiming 'They have set the bed on fire!' I sprang instantly to the spot, and saw a piece of printed paper, &c., on fire; securing a piece of it about the size of a dollar, it proved to be a part of the Derby Journal, a newspaper corresponding, &c. After the occurrence, the boy got up, and passed the night in the same bed with me, and when there, in reply to my questions as to how he knew of the fire so soon, and why he jumped so suddenly, he said it burned him, that his hand was in the blaze, and yet he was equally sure that his hand was under the coverlet.

"Again, the ladies stood facing the window and me, and about six feet from me—they were side by side, about two feet apart—no one else was in the room. Suddenly the daughter's right arm

straightened, inflicting an apparently severe blow on her companion's right arm, just below the shoulder, and at the same time she cried out, 'I am pinched!' The sleeve of her dress being turned up a little, there was plainly visible a mark closely resembling a severe pinch freshly made," &c.

These occurrences, to some, seem very surprising and supernatural; surprising, many think them, who do not insist upon their proceeding from the holy or the evil ghost. But to proceed, Mr. Beach says:—

"Sometimes occurrences have assumed a farcical appearance, leading directly to the conclusion that they were got up; and sometimes it has been as evident to the senses that they *were* actually done by members of the family, as at others that they had not, and could not have had any control over what transpired. When so done by the family, it has, to the witnesses, been perfectly evident that they were merely unconscious agents, and that the actions of their bodies were done without the knowledge of their minds. In this way they have charged each other, as have also their friends who were with them, upon the evidence of sight, with throwing things about the house.

"To the writer there is nothing superhuman in what has transpired, he believes in nothing like ghosts, &c. The theory is, that there exists in nature an element as yet unknown to the scientific world." That is the theory.

A single extract from the valuable experiences of the editor of the Derby Journal, is all that I

have been able to obtain, his papers not being easily accessible. This is it:—

"Here, then, were four individuals, with sound minds, listening to the most horrible rappings ever heard, racking their brains to ascertain from whence they emanated. We had not been in this position but a moment when something came against the door with great violence, and making a loud noise. Instantly every man sprang into the room, and fastened his eyes upon the persons in bed—the writer grasping the hands of the young lady, that he might not be deceived that she was not the cause. We found her in a very nervous state, and she told us that her cheek had been struck, which upon examination, we perceived was very red. The cause of the noise was a large white pitcher that stood some four feet from the bed, near the foot, and nearly in one corner of the room, and which had been flung with a force which no delicate female could possibly possess, against the door, breaking off the handle, and leaving an indentation in the clapboards of not quite a quarter of an inch deep. This last act staggered our sense—we could not believe it, and entered into a discussion on the spot. To show how unreasonable it is to suppose that the ladies threw it, we would state that to have done it they must have got out of bed. Now, the moment it *was* done, we were beside the bed, and the ladies' hands were under the clothes. No stirring of the hands was visible—nothing whereby we could arrive at the conclusion that the females were the actors.

"Let us also state that if the pitcher came in a straight line from where it stood, it would, according to a natural law of gravity, have struck in the corner of the room, and if it had went directly across the room, it would have struck the bureau; but it did neither, and must have taken a semi-circle course to have reached the place it did. This appears foolish, absurd and ridiculous; but we are stating *facts*, as they took place in the presence of four individuals. Our readers can form their own opinions."

We arrive now at the detail of a conversation with the Rev. Mr. Mitchell, whose evidence has had much weight.

Conversation with Rev. Jno. Mitchell, Aug. 6, 1851.

Mr. M., early in the progress of these strange doings at Stratford, gave his attention to them. Part of the manifestations he saw himself, and others he received evidence of principally through Dr. Phelps.

The "manifestations," for so they are called, occurred somewhat as follows:—

1. Furniture was displaced, thrown about, and piled at times when the family were absent, and the house locked.

2. Mesmeric writings were made on the walls in pencil, and afterward on various articles of dress, &c., which could be interpreted, so it is said, by persons in a mesmeric state.

3. Figures were arranged in various parts of the house.

4. Things of many sorts, such as would be accessible in a house, were thrown in mysterious ways, so that it was difficult, if not impossible for any person to have thrown them, and particularly so for any member of the family (so it was stated).

5. Loud noises were heard in many parts of the house, of many kinds, often screamings, which were not traced to any one, and which seemed too great and various to have been made by any members of the household.

6. Answers to various questions were rapped out—which appeared to some startling—which often were profane, if not scurrilous.

2, 3, 4, and 5 were the kinds of manifestation which Mr. M. was cognizant of. He states, however, that he did not see the writings in the act of being made by the invisible agent, or the figures arranged, or the things when rising from the table. The writings were found written, the figures already arranged—the things were seen when flying after having been thrown.

In reply to questions, Mr. M. stated that he could not recollect that the whole family, consisting of Dr. P. and wife, daughter about 17, son 12 or 13, two smaller children, and servant-girl, were ever collected at the same time into one room;—stated also that Dr. Phelps objected to sending away both the elder children at the same time; that when one was absent the manifestations continued; that the Dr. was in the habit of putting the boy into what is called the magnetic state, when he ap-

peared violently affected—strangely so; that he witnessed the daughter in this state for a portion of the 24 hours (in which she was said to have lain), much affected, to appearance, by some undefined fear.

Stated, also, that he understood from others, that the children, in sport, or to deceive incredulous persons, played some tricks; that he himself witnessed many things which were explicable, but many more which confounded his sagacity.

In reply to a question as to the character of the boy, stated that he should not consider his moral sense very acute.

In reply to questions respecting Dr. Phelps, stated that he had been deeply interested in mesmerism and kindred studies for years; had investigated, and also written much upon the subject; that he had collected great numbers of books upon these subjects, including ghost and witchcraft stories and so on; that he feared his senses were somewhat bewildered by these things—that his Christian character in the community had suffered—that he would possibly be flattered with attention, (who would not be?)—can not altogether approve of his course, yet, from what he saw, feels bound to believe that the doings were not the work of the family.

In reply to another question, stated that he understood that some manifestations were had after the family had left for Philadelphia, and while only Dr. Phelps and the servant-girl were staying

in the house; but did not witness any such himself.*

The Rev. Mr. Weed, also of Stratford, does not seem to have been so much impressed with these surprising occurrences. He even speaks slightly of the figures which W. describes as being of "angelic beauty"—whose chamber was named the "phantom room." In reply to a note of inquiry, he writes thus—

"STRATFORD, Nov. 11.

"Dear Sir—

"Your informant is mistaken—nothing of the kind ever occurred. Indeed, you may judge how grossly public rumor exaggerated the doings at the house in question, when I tell you that I have been questioned from at least twenty different sources, as to things—many of them much stranger than that you mention—which had been reported to have occurred there under my observation—all made out of whole cloth.

"The truth is, that for the whole period of the so-called 'manifestations,' I never went to the house except two or three times the first week. On these occasions, I saw nothing done which any body would have thought at all extraordinary. I saw, indeed, what *had been* done—the furniture of a room oddly disarranged—a child of three years old could have done it—images or dolls dressed up the size of life—I could have done that myself—&c. &c. And I was *told* by the family of various

* See Dr. P.'s account, denying this last fact.

strange appearances which, with no disposition to question their veracity, I was yet obliged, in the nature of the case, and in view of their state of feeling, to take with many grains of allowance.

"In short, having become thoroughly satisfied that there was nothing there to be alarmed at, no spiritual or supernatural agency of any kind, I would not, by continuing my visits, help to give eclat to what I saw was unnecessarily and unhappily exciting the public mind, and therefore kept out of the way.

"Very respectfully,
"W. B. WEED.

"Of course, having never witnessed any of the phenomena in question at the time of its occurrence, I have no evidence on which to charge any body with producing them, and have never done so."

We must give our attention to a short account, because what one does *not* see may come to be as important as any other evidence.

"NEW HAVEN, Sept. 27, 1851.

"MY DEAR SIR—I had quite forgotten your request for some notice of what I saw at Mr. Phelps' in Stratford, till my attention was called to it, &c. In my visit to the haunted house, I was accompanied by Rev. Mr. Garfield, Mr. Babcock, of the Palladium, and Mr. Lucius G. Peck. Nothing whatever occurred to gratify our curiosity or excite our wonder while in the house. But while

conversing with the family on the subject of their trials and perplexities, the lady of the house ran into the room, and said her son, a boy of 12 or 14, was missing. Except on the face of the father, I saw no expression of alarm or apprehension. He seemed greatly excited; but the rest of the family, consisting of Mrs. P., a daughter, a lady visitor, and her son, certainly manifested no extraordinary emotion. After a few hurried remarks, I noticed that Mrs. P. led the way to the back yard. What reason there was for not first examining the house did not appear. This was the first thing that looked suspicious to me, coupled with the general air of imperturbability over the family. The boy was found in the hay-mow, in an apparently comatose state, from which he recovered in the course of an hour. When the lad was brought down from the hay, Dr. P. was much agitated, but I saw no corresponding feeling on the part of others of the family. How a mother or a sister could take it so coolly, was, and is a mystery to me, supposing them to believe the absence of the boy was supernatural. I think this fact had as much influence on the opinion I formed as to the humbug of the whole concern, as any thing else; though the similarity of the writing which Dr. P. showed me, as being 'spiritual,' to that of the boy when I got him into a room alone, together with the singular fact that every broken window could be reached only from the door-way of the young ladies' bedroom, conspired to increase my contempt for the whole concern. Besides this, the strongest indiffer-

ence seemed to prevail as to the possibility of the strange doings being the result of roguery. For instance, Dr. P. seems never to have recognized his son's handwriting, though his room was flooded with his lucubrations, in a regular school-boy's hand. The disposition was strongly manifested to set down every thing at all out of the way, as the devil's doings. The most wonderful of the doings at Stratford, as represented to me, did not come within a thousand miles of what Signor Blitz daily does. The impression on my mind was, that some object was to be secured by humbugging the old gentleman, and that the interested parties had been entirely successful in their object.

"Yours truly,

"HORACE DAY."

The reader having arrived thus far, will no doubt stop, take breath, and ask what, in heaven's name, these things do mean. This matter which we have been investigating is no ways the first among these things, nor will it be the last. Many books tell of many things which might easily be supposed, by a change of names, to be accounts of this "Stratford mystery." John Aubrey gives the following notices of rappings, which may seem to some to have been supernatural. The Stratford rappings, however, appear not to have been so prominent a part of the performances as in the spiritual demonstrations at Rochester.

Mr. Baxter, in "Certainty of the World of Spirits," so says Mr. Aubrey, has this:—"A gentle-

man, formerly seemingly pious, hath of late years fallen into the sin of drunkenness; and when he has been drunk, and slept himself sober, something *knocks* at his bed's head, as if one knocked on a wainscot, &c. It poseth me to think what kind of spirit this is."

Certainly—and none can so well explain as those who have been drunk and slept themselves sober, as Mr. Baxter (the old Saint's Rest), most likely had not.

But there are other significant knocks on record; for Major John Morgan, of Wells, did aver, that as he lay in bed with Mr. Barlow, son of the dean of Wells, they heard three distinct knocks on the bed; Mr. Barlow shortly after fell sick and died.*

If any one has died in consequence of the rappings at Stratford or Rochester, it is not known to me; nor indeed does Mr. Aubrey say that Mr. Barlow's death was the result of those "three knocks."

Many, however, might have died after these "knockings" of ours, and we none the wiser, because, in these swift days, men die and are buried, and their names are in the newspaper perhaps for the first time. But, as Job said, "Where are they?"

We must now appeal to a witness of another cast. Descending from his lofty pedestal, he even goes to Stratford by rail and steam to let us know the truth of these peculiar mysteries; he has not only seen in the spirit but also has paid his travel-

* Aubrey's Miscellanies, p. 121.

ing expenses and seen in the body. The seer's words are good—but who guarantees the seer?

"I was impressed," says the seer, "to visit the village of Stratford, Connecticut, for the express purpose of observing with both my natural and spiritual perceptions, a variety of *mysterious noises* and *exciting phenomena* occurring there at a private residence. And now I desire the reader to follow me," &c.*

Gladly shall we do so if we may get light upon this dim subject. He mentions a few only of such facts as have already been noted, and says,† of course no one will pretend to affirm the *impossibility* of there being any human agency in the performance of some of these mysterious feats: nay, on the contrary, it is consistent with reason to believe that almost every thing developed in that house, could have been caused under favorable circumstances, by the concerted plans and inventions of some members of the family," ("could have been!") A disposition to admit a natural explanation is always honorable, if such explanation can be sustained—which however we shall see, he does not by any means allow. He says, that "when the family were *all* assembled in one room, and it being ascertained" (we earnestly desire to learn the method of knowing this trifling fact with certainty) "that the domestics were *honest*, and for the most part *ignorant of what was going on*, then should a book be thrown," &c., "or should the boy's panta-

* The Philosophy of Spiritual Intercourse, &c., by Andrew Jackson Davis. New York, 1851. † P. 48.

loons be suddenly torn into strips, while, *as it is alledged*,* his hands were grasped by his mother;" "then the only inference is that those things were caused by an invisible intelligence, and potency"—"Inference!" *only?* Whether the seer is right in calling the author of such doings an "intelligence" some may doubt; but to call a spirit a "potency" requires more bravery than most possess. These however are trifles, unworthy of us and our subject.

We can only put down here a few of the important revelations of Mr. Davis upon this subject. We learn from him that there was a boy (before mentioned) in the family, and one or two girls. "The young girl and her brother were exceedingly surcharged with vital magnetism, and vital electricity,"† (H. B. Taylor also says that the eldest daughter had been put into "the abnormal state" about a year before these occurrences) and we are not therefore surprised when the seer tells us that when he heard a quick loud rap under the boy's "left foot" "he instantly perceived that his system like the torpedo-eel had discharged a small volume or current of vital electricity from the sole of the foot,"‡ &c. May heaven defend us from the spread of this torpedo inspiration; might not a Leyden-jar be safer than a boy?

"And let me remark," he further says,§ "that I have heard instances of mischief cited, as occurring in this house, in evidence of satanic agency, which

* By whom Mr. D. does not say.
† P. 50.
‡ P. 50.
§ P. 51.

I now discover to have been sometimes accomplished by the youth in his sport (!), sometimes by electrical discharges and magnetic attractions, and sometimes by the almost unpardonable mischievousness of persons unknown to the family." We trust that the last clause will commend itself to the citizens of Stratford, and that the town will remunerate Dr. Phelps for the "wanton destruction" of window-glass and tea-cups, perpetrated, it may be, by some of themselves. The seer tells us* "that the parents of Henry I believe have received his testimony as being literally true, but *I* have discovered that he frequently failed to discriminate; on one occasion he was found with a rope passed under his arms and suspended to the limb of a tree. When removed from that position he related that he 'screamed at the top of his voice,' but it was ascertained that had he in reality done so, the domestics who were near the spot must have heard him. Now it was not with the intention to deceive, that he made this declaration; he really supposed that he had called aloud, as I discovered when reviewing the circumstances from my superior condition; at which time I also learned that to control the boy from effecting some premeditated imprudence, a spirit near him, taking advantage of the electrical state of his system, actually made him unconsciously instrumental in *tying himself* to the tree; and in order that he might not escape and accomplish his previously conceived design, the guardian spirit impressed him to feel

* P. 52.

fright, and to *think* that he called for help till such time as was deemed prudent to release him."* We have not one word to say to this very complete elucidation of the mystery; but we do say that we regret that the Rev. Dr. Phelps should have used hard expressions respecting such spirits who saved such a boy.

Had we ourselves been a seer (we say it modestly) we should have admitted the scream, but have urged that it was a spiritual one; not plain to gross, "domestic" ears, which are too short.

There is no doubt, the seer tells us, but what these manifestations are produced by spiritual beings, and in reply to perhaps the unnecessary question, "Why do spirits visit mankind in this apparently insignificant manner?" we have a turnip† inscribed with truly mystical characters, which contains the answer. Fortunately, Mr. Davis is able to translate the new hieroglyphics. The answer (note the question) is, "You may expect a variety of things from our society!" Various other questions are answered in this peculiar and lucid manner, and Dr. Phelps may possibly have been in error in saying that they were "bad spirits—lying spirits."‡ With two or three important or unimportant statements of our seer, we will go on our way. He says,§ "During his (the youth's) *absence*, no very interesting manifestations occurred."‖ The tableauxed groupings of figures were made from articles of wearing apparel belonging to the family—were discovered in the young lady's sleep-

* P. 53. † P. 54. ‡ See Letter. § P. 58. ‖ P. 63.

ing apartment! These are surprising, as admissions, if not as facts. We give one more spiritual explanation, which certainly, we think, "covers the whole ground."

"The precise manner," he says,* "in which some of the written communications, as also the representative figures, which have been found in and about that house originated, I am now impressed to state. (But) I will here remark that spirits can influence some peculiar organization, so as to induce a *somnambulic* state of mind, and then cause the individual to do what he could not do in his natural condition; and, upon releasing him from that state, they can, in the twinkling of an eye, efface from his external memory all impressions of the transaction in which he was instrumental; and thus render him totally forgetful of what he has been doing."—Leaving out the seer's superfluous "but," this paragraph may be significant and aid us in our distress. The external mind, however, is somewhat novel to those of us who still continue in the "inferior condition," which, we pray heaven, we may be soon released from.

We are now at the end of our rope, and yet where are we? Job says, "A man *dies*, and where is he?" I ask, a man *lives*, and where is he? Must a man believe every thing, or nothing? Must a man see and hear what he is told to see or hear, or must he shut his eyes? Can he not then say, I do see *that*, but that I do *not* see—I do see that which is easily explained, and I see that which is

* P. 67.

not, to me, easy of explanation—and I see, besides, what I have full faith is *supernatural?*—Who among our seers does this, unless it be the great seer himself, whose narration is last given?

In summing up this important matter, the question of questions to honest witnesses is, what did you see yourself?—and you—and you—and you? What was your *own* experience? Unfortunately, the actual experiences of three important witnesses are quite different from those things of which they heard—*were told of*, as having occurred. Generally the writers do not wish to say, "I saw," but many are ready to put down what *has been seen and done.* This should be borne steadily in mind. Many were witnesses to what seemed to them inexplicable; most to what they could explain—and some to what they believed to be of a supernatual character. While there is a curious agreement among the witnesses that some things were done by members of this unfortunate family, Dr. Phelps does not admit this, yet the Seer Davis distinctly, as has been already shown, claims to *know* it, and, indeed, to explain it by his philosophy:—"surcharged electricity"—"spirits impressed him"—"vital magnetism and vital electricity"—"somnambulic states of mind," &c. Thus he goes on in an edifying and satisfactory way, interesting at least to many.

We will leave Dr. Phelps standing as he does, and look hastily at the other testimony.

H. B. Taylor, in New Haven Journal, says, "On one occasion the boy was lifted up and carried

across the room;" again, "his chair was seen dragging after him, and his pantaloons were cut into strips;" again, "one morning a piece of shingle was seen to fly about the room, and on that was found unknown characters;" again, "at one time the family had left the supper-room, and the servant was below in the kitchen; the table, with its contents, was lifted three times from the floor, and let down with great force, so that the whole house was jarred, and the dishes on the table were heard to rattle, but none were found broken."

"W." also in the New Haven Journal and Courier, gives us very full accounts, which are heretofore printed in full. He says, "I was not an eye-witness;"—of course his flowing narrative, if more interesting in a literary point of view, goes along with that evidence called hearsay. "W." himself is not faithless, but believing.

Mr. Mitchell seems to have been impressed by many very surprising manifestations, some of which he learned from Dr. Phelps: let us turn now to what was seen by the narrators.

Mr. M. states that he saw writings on the walls, figures dressed up, articles of the house flying through the air, but did not see the writings in the act of being made, the figures of being arranged, or the things as they arose from the table—that he saw the daughter in what appeared to be a magnetic condition.

The writer of the letter signed "W." stated to the compiler that "he did not himself see any

thing surprising, but learned of them from those in whom he had the utmost confidence."

H. B. Taylor mentions what "was done," and "were seen," but does not say that he saw any thing supernatural himself.

"Veritas," heretofore mentioned, did see apple-cores, peach-stones, &c., thrown.

Mr. Newson, of the Derby Journal, an important witness, gives his testimony that a pitcher in the girl's chamber was broken in a miraculous manner. The rest of his evidence is unfortunately not accessible.

Mr. Day says, "The impression upon my mind was, that some object was to be gained."

Mr. Beach, of the New York Sun, saw a match-box perform what might be supernatural, or what might be common-place. He heard the warning of the boy, and then saw that a piece of the Derby Journal was on fire somewhere, but whether or not it burned the boy's hand remained undecided. He saw two ladies stand near one another, when one received a blow from the other. In conclusion, he says, "To the writer there is nothing superhuman in what has transpired."

Rev. Mr. Weed says, "I saw nothing done which any body would have thought at all extraordinary. I saw, indeed, what *had been* done, and I was told, &c." Here the case must rest; we would not willingly charge upon any one deliberate exaggeration or falsehood, nor would any fair-minded person decide that what seems novel and suprising, is therefore false. Every sane person will appeal to

the great laws of God ever present in history and in his own consciousness, and by these he will try the spirits, whether they be of God or of man. The great jury of the public opinion will decide this thing also; we have much of the evidence before us. The burden of proof, however, rests with Dr. Phelps himself. Fortunately he is a man of character, property, and position, and he chooses to stand where he does; no man will hinder him if none heed him.

Many believe, but may be thankful for any help to their unbelief. Many more will be strongly disposed to exclaim when they shall have read through this mass of evidence—"It began with nothing, it has ended with nothing." *Ex nihil, nihil fit!*

The Voice of God.

"For God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth not: in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men in slumberings upon the bed: then openeth he the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction."*

So we find it written in that sublime Poem of Job; and well may we inquire *why*, if such was ever the way of God's speaking, he should have withdrawn himself so far from us? God is from everlasting, and *he* never changes, neither does his truth, though *we* learn of him and of his truth slowly and painfully. These great questions press upon us now as they have from the beginning, viz., what is God's voice—where is it—and how are we to hear it?

In the dim past they have been asked in prayers, or shouted in frenzys. In the spasmodic present a still small voice does from time to time repeat them. And the future will open upon its unborn millions, with them yet unresolved. Here and there one does believe that he has heard that voice, and that there is in every man a "holy of

* Job xxxiii. 14.

holies," from which it ought to issue; and now and then *is* heard; unknown and unnoticed by the busy multitude who gape for some great thing, for some sign in the sky, forgetting the "signs of the times."*

Most live by sight—most live as their fathers lived—believe as their fathers believed—die as their fathers died; if they move, it is by necessity only; if their souls wake up, it is to go drowsily in the wheel-ruts of custom, after one or two flounderings which commonly lay them in the mud: it seems safer to them to go in those ruts—it *is* easier.

Some believe in (hope for) a perpetual revelation of truth, which may enlighten every one who comes into the world. Many, however, are weak, and they ask of those who are strong; one says one thing, one another; just so far as the soul is undebauched by education, by interest, or is not bounded by weakness and fear—so far are they enabled to answer the truth—and so far do *all* agree. Strip men down to their honest beliefs, and how nearly do they agree! But so far as the soul is twisted do they disagree; and in those things, and the turmoil growing out of the fierce fight respecting them, does poor truth disappear in clouds of dust and jargon, and lie hidden, but not lost, in the clear waters of some well, which always springs upward to life.

What is true, lives! What is not true, perishes. What is true is God, or from God: what is false, is not—is denial of God. What is true, IS: what

* David Brewster, Natural Magic.

is false, is not. All the king's horses and all the king's men—all the councils of Christendom or Heathendom can not make the true false, nor the false, true. Let us depend upon this; and be honest and modest. No matter how many men or nations have said, "This or that is true—if it is not true, they could not make it so, nor can *we;* and it does not help us if we say, "Should we give this up, what shall we depend upon?" Upon the false we can not depend, that is certain. A blind worship of the darkness of antiquity has gone nigh to perish us. No man has ever lived who was infallible; who knew the whole truth—it can not be—because the truth is infinite, and rises higher and higher into the regions of the unknown, of what we call God. But no man has ever yet lived who had not some truth; most men more than they have faith in; and through the Æons or cycles, this is dug out like ore from the mine, and is stamped as current coin;—in this sense is the Vox Populi the Vox Dei—and in no other!

But men long for, yearn after truth; certainty of truth, more and more: they will have it—or they will have something else. Forgetting the fact that man is here to LABOR, and to get the truth, only as the end of constant labor—that he who seeks finds—most soon tire of the search, which at first is apt to be unremunerative; they drop their hands, and say there is no truth—no God—no virtue;—nothing but pleasures—let us eat and drink and die!—and be damned!

This is totally opposed, face to face, to man's stronger and better nature; and so long as man has any soul remaining he can not rest, he can not sleep—he can not live in peace till he spits out this Sodom fruit.

So man finds at last, and he spits it out of his mouth. But he does not often say to himself, I will live my life through patiently, and always search for the truth, and wait quietly its natural growth from experience or from my soul—or from God. Oh, no; man can not wait, he can not get on; to-day comes his need, and so man agrees to call something truth—to set up some standard, which he will live by and die by, and make every individual of his species do the same—if he can!

It has been said, and well said, by one who could speak,* and it is now repeated, viz.: "It is not in the power of any man of science to alter his opinions [to order] to turn them in this way and that: he can not be commanded, he must be convinced!"

Man has from the first done violence to his nature, which is infinite reaching to Divinity. He has believed, or been made to believe, that his soul was mean and vile, and he has done much to make it so; but never has the godlike disappeared from among men.

Man has groped like a sleep-walker, listening for a voice from without rather than to one within (and he does now); what he has heard he has too often twisted and distorted to fit it to his *lower*

* Galileo.

sense, his lower self; and then, nauseated as he is like to be, will he not say, "I'll try no more!" so catching at something, he holds by it, swearing, "This I will have for my truth,"—what fits *it*, I will accept; what does not, I will reject: and then, with an inconceivable energy builds up structures called priesthoods, oracles, churches, theories, and what not?

So long as this contrivance—too often a dog-house—will hold him and his truth, so well; but how is it if he finds it, by and by, rather small? how will it be when he determines to stuff in the whole pack of truths? It may then become ridiculous, and their tails shall stick out of the windows—or it may become painful to those so crowded, and they shall burst up in a shocking manner, tossing him and his kennel to perdition, in a most surprising way.

The mystic region whence issues the "Voice of God," "Inspiration," "Revelation," "Oracles," "Decrees," by whatever word men have described this means of getting at that truth which is *known*, not seen—is as yet an unexplored country, like that of Prester John—few have got within its boundaries, few have returned to tell a story, and few have told any who did return. It is quite time for some adventurous person to learn further of it, and to tell his discovery to us, even though he run great risk of being torn to pieces, and of being eaten by dogs.

All nations have had a revelation, and those who have left a written history, have had a written

revelation in inspired sacred books, more or less perfect, containing some truth usually mingled with a large alloy of mistake and fable.

The Hebrew approached by the Hindoo missionary offering *his* bible (his "sacred books," his Vedas) meets with a rebuff. The Israelite proselyting among the Hindoos meets with the like ill success; both appeal to unnumbered, and inexplicable miracles to attest their divine mission;* both appeal to the lofty character of truths coming directly from God in the infancy of time. One may contain more, and the other less, but their *claims* are the same, and the balance may then be in favor of the one or the other: each must compare and search, and *then* decide. But in many things they agree; in some of the great truths which underlie this vast creation they are identical; so far then as they coincide, so far their inspiration is unquestioned, the one by the other.

But the world has not got along so; time moves too swiftly; who can stop to investigate and collate? some shorter and surer method of getting at this voice seems necessary, and a priesthood is exactly the thing for the purpose. Pontiffs "bridge over" heaven and earth; mediators stand between God and man; men who know how to interpret these sacred books, help us in straits, and indeed insure men of salvation—for a consideration.

Priests, unfortunately for themselves, fortunately for man—are subject to like passions as the rest—have no way of getting at the truth but by

* De Ward's India and the Hindoos, p. 217.

the slow processes of study, search, thought; by honest and earnest effort—and alas, they may fail, do fail disastrously, and are at times in danger of utter contempt and degradation. But with the need comes the helper. Science does wonders for a time; he who can know when the sun shall be darkened, can, if he be sagacious enough, be accounted the special favorite of heaven; he who can make of a walking-stick a serpent, or make his voice issue from the roofs,—cheat the senses by sights and sounds, he too can easily be accredited as the medium for all wisdom, even the incarnation of God himself.*

Science will not answer every turn, for other helps are vouchsafed; other men by and by learn from science too, and the priesthood based upon it tumbles in pieces; then come oracles, diviners, astrologers, dreamers, traditions, ghosts, demons, and what not beside? Even "children, fools and madmen" are listened to for the truth rather than men; for they, whatever else they are, may be honest, unbiased by a worldly aim. So it is that crazed persons have been supposed to be possessed people, having spirits, and as such, entitled to respect, if not awe;† and such is to this day the feeling among some of the oriental nations.

Another fact here presents itself and demands attention.

"The notion that the gods imparted to men the arts of civilization was common to the Egyptians

* Wilkinson's Egypt, vol. i. p. 320.

† See Matthew's Gospel, chap. viii. Eschylus's Agamemnon.

as to the Greeks; in all cases it was an abstract idea, representing the means by which intellectual gifts were imparted from the deity to man."* Every act of nature seemed to be an *especial* act of spiritual interference; and so general has been this belief through all history, that it may be placed among those developments common to humanity. The thunder was the terrible voice of God, "the glorious God that maketh it, that breaketh the cedar trees, that maketh the hills skip, that divideth the flames of fire."† The lightnings were the thunderbolts of Jove to the Greeks, "Thor's Hammer" to the Northmen,‡ to the Hebrews the wrath of Jehovah, a devouring fire. All nature in this view becomes instinct with spirit; every rock, every tree, waterfall, or fountain, has its shadowy genius, and no fact of existence but is impressed with the finger of deity, no thought or aspiration of the soul but is *direct* from God. This view may be sustained, and indeed it seems hardly possible with our notions of special providence to deny it; but it is objectionable because it includes too much, and may make the good God the author of evil thoughts; and because in every case now and heretofore it has led man insensibly and directly to idolatry; to the worship of the fact instead of the spirit.

The weaker and sicker the man, the greater his

* Wilkinson's Egypt, vol. i. p. 324. John's Gospel, chap. v. ver. 4. Homer. Diodorus sic. Pigott's Scandinavian Mythology, &c. &c.

† David's 29th Psalm.

‡ Pigott's Mythology.

craving for supports and props; and common experience shows that he runs from one quack to another, till his soul, like his body, dies—is perhaps poisoned. He forgets that with his soul, as with his body, the means of cure are only to be found in his own secret nature; that the *vis medicatrix naturæ* is not, in either case, without, but within.*

In ignorance is uncertainty; in this fear. So long as men knew not of science or natural laws, it was impossible to understand how the lightnings should destroy a man or a temple unless God were angry. Should the tempest overcome them, or the waters engulf, then man had offended the unknown power. Having this belief, some act of propitiation must be done, and naught could address itself so well to a spirit, an unseen and aërial deity, as sacrifice—to take from man and give to God—of man's substance, which should ascend to the spirit in the smoke and incense of fat burning rams and bulls. This was in the ignorance and weakness of nations. God being an arbitrary and capricious being, as nature seemed then to show, it was all-important to know how to propitiate his favor, how to avert his wrath; and it is easy to see how eagerly any one who should say that he knew how it could be done, proving it, too, by signs and wonders—how eagerly he should be accepted as the go-between for man to God.†

A few impracticable men have in all times ap-

* Jesus of Nazareth's words in Luke, xvii. 12.

† See Bruce's Works, v. iii. p. 76. "Kal Hatzé."

peared,—I thank God for them—and of some we have knowledge from the distant past. Isaiah said of God,* that he "had not spoken in secret." Jeremiah, too,† said to those Hebrews, "For I (God) spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I came out of Egypt concerning *burnt offerings and sacrifices*, but this thing I commanded them: Obey my voice, and I will be your God." One holier than they, Jesus of Nazareth, says,—and what may we not believe of his words?—"Whoso *doeth* the will of God, he shall *know* the truth." Is God's voice then, to be heard in thunders from mercy-seats—oracles—voice of antiquity—accumulated voice of the church, Greek, Roman, or Egyptian? Is it to be heard so, or in a still small way, which *is* inspiration? He who does one honest deed, which he knows to be of God, shall then know of another, and shall learn the truth which is to set him free!

I beseech you, my friends, not to shirk this question. Shut your eyes if you will, but you do not put out the sun. You may make yourself dark, but where will you end save in the pit?

We come at last to the great fact of humanity, the central fire which warms all—that God has revealed himself, and does now reveal himself through man; and his voice is only heard in the past and in the present—in the secret chambers of the soul. He has not spoken in secret, because those chambers are not shut to the owner who knocks. The *idea* of God or Spirit comes to each

* Ch. xlviii. † Ch. vii.

one by revelation or inspiration—the *knowledge* of him by experience.

Just so far as man has inquired at this oracle, listened reverently, and faithfully acted by it—has his God been true and holy; as he, the man, has been, so has been his God!*

The rudest man—next above the beast—uses a stock or a stone—and to it he bows down and mutters his incoherences.

The Hindoo dreams in the quiet indolence of a luxurious climate, only of Repose—and his God, therefore, enjoys the highest bliss of constant sleep.†

"He wakes, and Creation is."

The Oriental knows as the Highest, a Despot whose nod is life or death. His God is such to him, a deified king.‡

The wandering Israelite chants of his God of battles, who shall destroy his enemies, "even to the going down of the sun"—and protect his people Israel. Such was his God, for he went forth to destroy and take possession, rooting out all the nations in his way.

The Greek raises his brave Fighter to the rank of God; and has a faith, that upon such deeds as he himself did, he will smile—interpose over his worshiper his goat-skin shield, and save or help him.§

* Mosheim, ch. i. § xix. Montesquieu, Spirit of Laws, bk. 14, ch. 5.

† Wright's Lectures.

‡ Sanchoniatho—also Osiris in Lempriere—and Wilkinson's Egypt, v. i. p. 320.

§ Epiphanius in Cony's Ancient Fragments.

God is not arbitrary: he is not fickle. He can not be persuaded or bribed or importuned, to change his fickle mind—it is now simply absurd and degrading so to believe. He can not have had favorites, men or nations, because we know that JUSTICE in *man* does not admit of favoritism, nor does it in God. God is not revengeful, nor possessed of merely earthly appetites and passions; it simply can not be, because the highest man overcomes these, and God is higher than he. No man or nation is worthy of guiding or teaching the rest of men as to the character of God, who rests in this lower region, enthralled by sense; and it becomes idiotic and hateful so to insist; desolating with fire and sword of steel or opinion when this is denied. Those only are the Atheists who hold to such vile ideas of God when better ones are within their reach. A metaphysical God rises up —all jangled and out of time—a thing of shreds and patches, straps and pegs—dogmas and articles —fast becoming a scare-crow which the crows do peck at. Let its exit not be saddened by our tears!

Man's knowledge of God has then come slowly, slowly—just as all his other knowledge has come through the long lapse of ages; and in no other way can it have come. God is the same now as he was in the Beginning, and shall be in the End; and God's truth is the same; what is true now, was true in the beginning; and what *was* then *is* now. Man-stealing, or killing, or cruelty, or lying, was as wrong then as now; and the true God did

not favor those men or nations who did such things then, nor does he now. Another voice now sounds,* and who will may listen and learn:—"Truth can not contradict truth—all truth gained is a step gained which brings man nearer to Heaven."

Through the real, man reaches to a *knowledge* of the ideal; through matter he reaches spirit. He may have, and he has had a sense of the illimitable (read Job), of the infinite—an inspiration, intuition of it†—but his intuitions grow to be certainty to the whole race—Man—only through labor, sorrow, experience of untold ages. There is no royal road to wealth—there is no royal road to science—there is no royal road to God! Individuals (men) have had this faith, and some have given it voice,‡ and these have kept alive the faith of humanity, redeemed it from the slough of sensuality; and have been truly "sons of God."§

Slowly does the day come on, so slowly that many say, it grows darker and not lighter—slowly it does become brighter—slowly but surely, it does come to man that he can not stand against God's fixed law. Slowly and certainly does it become clearer that God manifests himself in immutable principles, upon which all action is based; which whosoever does not search for, find out, must *inevitably* take the consequences, which are Evil

* Household Words.

† Morell's Philosophy of Religion, p. 129.

‡ See Pythagoras—the Vedas, in Asiatic Researches, &c. &c.

§ David's 2d Psalm, ver. 7.

and Misery. Slowly, but clearly, does it come to some, that man's business here is to work out this (through darkness, doubt, despair, through tribulation, anguish, but with hope), viz.: the knowledge of what God's will is, as to him, individually, and to the race, as man; and finding it out to *do it*, not as a unit only, but also as one of the race—always bearing on his banner, in golden letters, that word "Excelsior"—and saying to every weary and way-worn traveler, Higher—higher! till he, having so worked, and when full of years, shall rise again to that other state where the unknown shall blossom into the known, and doubt shall vanish.

Oracles.

"On the subject of oracles, it may not be improper, once for all, to inform the American reader that the Apollo of Delphi was, to use Mr. Bayle's words, the judge without appeal; the *greatest* of the heathen GODS, not preserving in relation to oracles his advantage or superiority."*

Let us, in a small way, satisfy the anxious inquirer as to the character of these oracular answers. Crœsus, the king of the Lydians, says Herodotus,† determined to consult the different oracles of Greece, and also that of Libya. His motive in these consultations (praiseworthy surely) was, to form an idea of the truth of the oracles respectively. Of the oracular answers in general, we have no account remaining; but the Lydians had no sooner (!) entered the temple of Delphi, and proposed their questions, than the Pythian answered thus, in heroic verse:—

> "I count the sand, I measure out the sea,
> The silent and the dumb are heard by me;
> E'en now the odors to my sense that rise,
> A tortoise boiling with a lamb supplies;
> While brass below and brass above it lies."

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* Beloe's Herodotus. † Book I. § 46.

Crœsus found none of the answers satisfactory except this:—"But a fervor of gratitude and piety was excited in him so soon as he heard the reply of the Pythian, and he exclaimed that there was no true oracle but Delphi, for this alone had explained his employment at the stipulated time."

It will not be improper to insert here the note which Mr. Beloe has appended to this singular affair; because it indicates that there were deniers even in those days—and also by way of explanation.

Lucian makes Jupiter complain of the great trouble the deities undergo on account of mankind. "As for Apollo," says he, "he has undertaken a troublesome office; he is obliged to be at Delphi this minute, at Colophon the next, here at Delos, there at Branchidæ, just as his ministers choose to require him; not to mention the tricks which are played to make trial of his sagacity, when people boil together the flesh of a lamb and a tortoise; so that if he had not had a very acute nose, Crœsus would have gone away and abused him."

Crœsus desired to propitiate the deity, and made great and rich offerings and sacrifices, for he wished greatly to learn the result of an expedition which he projected against Persia. He received the following words from the oracle:—

> "When o'er the Medes a mule shall sit on high,
> O'er pebbly Hermus then, soft Lydian, fly;
> Fly with all haste, for safety scorn thy fame,
> Nor scruple to deserve a coward's name."

The king was elated with this reply, for the impossibility involved in the first line indicated to his pious heart that he must be successful; so he determined to attack Cyrus, whose successes provoked his jealousy.

Sad to tell, he failed; was defeated by Cyrus, attacked in his own capital, taken prisoner, condemned to death, and saved only by a miracle, viz., the magnanimity of his conqueror.

"Sir," said he to Cyrus—and one can not but admire the gentlemanly tone of irony—"you will materially oblige me by your permission to send these fetters to the god of Greece, whom, above all others, I have honored, and to inquire of him whether it be his rule to delude those who have claims on his kindness."

The god neither flew into a passion, nor did he frown in dignified and cold contempt; on the contrary, inspired by the like lofty and gentlemanlike principle, he proceeded to apologize and explain. He said,* "that to avoid the determination of destiny was impossible even for a divinity; that he had really obviated the decrees of fate as far as possible—indeed that of this, Crœsus might be assured, that if the will of the fates had been punctually fulfilled, he would have been three years sooner a captive;" and much more, which, if paraphrased to suit this time, might have read, "that he had done as well as he could under the circumstances; that men had no business to be asking foolish questions as to what was going to become

* Herod. Book I. § 91.

of them; that some folks, it is true, squandered a good deal of money upon gods and their wire-pullers, but they might thank their stars that they were not worse off, and say nothing more about it!"

The king received the apology in good part, exculpated the god, and professed himself satisfied,—a termination not unlike what ensues when two "chivalrous fire-eaters," not to be appeased with any thing but "heart's blood," lay down their quills at the sound of the magic word "apology," and drag along ever after in the old ruts of custom and chicane.

"Herodotus says (b. ii. c. 54), 'concerning the two oracles (namely, among the Greeks and in Libya) the Egyptians gave me the following account: The priests of Jupiter, at Thebes, said that two holy women (literally priestesses) were carried away from Thebes by the Phœnicians, and they had learned that one of them was sold in Libya and the other in Greece. And these women were the first founders of the oracles among these people.'"*

But of all oracles, that of Apollo Pythius, at Delphi, was the most celebrated.

This divine institution was first suggested by a goat-herd's observing some of his flock to frisk in a remarkable manner, near the entrance of a cave on Mount Parnassus. Investigating the matter, he, too, was seized with a like spiritual madness, and began to dance and skip and prophesy. The thing spreading and gaining fame

* Hengstenberg, p. 199. Translated by Robbins of Andover.

it was taken in hand by persons in authority; a magnificent temple was built over it, and the holy madness was only experienced by a pure virgin, till such time as one having been debauched by Echecrates,* it became necessary to choose, as the Pythia or priestess, one above the age of fifty years, who, if not too cool to be tempted, was at least secure from detection—and so religion and the oracle could be preserved from contempt.

She sat on a tripod over the mouth of the cavern, having first fasted, and bathed in the fountain of Castalia, and perhaps eaten the laurel leaves; She in the violent enthusiasm which ensued, rehearsed the dark and mysterious verses, which sometimes proceeding from the stomach or belly in an incoherent form, were reshaped and handed over to the devout, by the anointed priests or prophets.

Mr. Bayle observes that at first it gave its answers in verse, and that it fell into prose upon the people's beginning to laugh at the poorness of its versification! The Epicureans made it the subject of their jests, saying, that it was surprising how Apollo, the patron of the poets, should himself be so much poorer a poet than Homer whom he had inspired.

There exist those who have said that the Pythia was as other women are, or have been, extortioners, unjust, deceitful. Themistocles and Demosthenes are said to have had suspicions, and the latter bade the Athenians to remember that Per-

* See Diodorus Siculus, lib. xiv.

icles and Epaminondas, instead of amusing themselves with the answers of the oracle, consulted only reason in the choice and execution of their measures. Can we wonder that the dogs barked, and the children cried infidel, at such a scorner?—But alas! alas! read this—

Eusebius tells us of a philosopher, one Ænomaus, who, at least, can not be charged with fear, who speaks thus to Apollo: "When we come to consult thee, if thou seest what is in futurity, why dost thou use expressions that will not be understood? If things must necessarily come to pass, why dost thou amuse us with thy ambiguities? What dost thou, wretch as thou art, at Delphi?—muttering idle prophecies!"

The great riches of this shrine, amassed by the offerings and payments of worshipers, made it a prize for the unbelievers. The Gauls, under Brennus, two hundred and seventy-eight years before Christ—attacked it; and Nero, at last, robbed it of five hundred of its most precious statues—sic transit gloria mundi! Where is Apollo—and where the oracle!

Most of the pagan deities had these oracles: Apollo had the greatest number.

Isis, Osiris and Serapis delivered, in like manner, their oracles by DREAMS, &c.

At the oracle of Ammon, the priests delivered the response of their god.

At Dodona (Jupiter's), the answer came from the hollow of an oak.

At the cave of Trophonius, the answer was in-

ferred from what the suppliant said when he recovered his senses.

At Memphis, it was good or bad, according as the ox Apis received or refused what was offered, &c.

Oracles were frequently given by LOT.*

Ablancourt says,† that the study or research of the meaning of oracles, was but a fruitless thing; and that they were never understood till after their accomplishment! What would he have said about other holy prophecies? We may well wonder.

Their answers were carefully doubled—and might have one of two or more meanings. This was certainly wise, and indicated that the oracle was not a fool, whatever might have been thought or said of its questioners.

When Alexander was sick at Babylon, some of his courtiers asked of the oracle at Serapis if it would not be well to bring the conqueror to be cured by the god. The reply was, that it was better that he should remain where he was.

The fatigue of the journey might have killed him, or he might have died in the temple, which would have been bad for the god as well as the king; but if he died at Babylon it was only necessary to say, that he died at the proper place and time; if he recovered, what glory would accrue to the god for saving him!

Mr. Bayle says positively they were mere human artifices in which the Devil had no hand—he

* See Sortes. † See Rees.

was strongly supported by Van Dale and Fontenelle, who wrote upon the subject. Bishop Sherlock, however, in his "Discourses upon Prophecy," says it is impious to disbelieve the heathen oracles as having been given out by the Devil, while Dr. Middleton* says that he then is guilty of this impiety, and thinks himself warranted to pronounce from the authority of the best and wisest of the heathen themselves, and the evidence of plain facts which are recorded of these oracles, as well as from the nature of the thing itself, that they were all mere imposture, wholly invented and supported by human craft, without any supernatural aid or interposition whatever! A bold man this Middleton and plain-spoken.

When did the oracles cease? Eusebius endeavors to show that the oracles became dumb upon the coming of Christ—"yet as it appears by the laws of Theodosius, Gratian, and Valentinian, that they were consulted as late as the year 358, he is not altogether conclusive; and Cicero, being a heathen, gives this explanation, that they ceased in proportion as the people growing less credulous, began to suspect them for cheats."†

Most of the "fathers" supposed that it was the Devil who spoke in the oracles, and Vassius thinks that the obscurity of the answers was owing to his ignorance of what God intended to do!‡

No nation of which we have any history was without something which they agreed to believe

* Works, vol. iii. † See Rees. ‡ Rees.

when sore straitened to know what was what—nor is there any now but what has such a thing after some sort.

SIBYLS.

Are defined by the writer in Rees's Cyclopedia, as virgin prophetesses, supposed to be divinely inspired, who gave oracles, and foretold things to come. The most celebrated are the Erythræan, Delphic, and Cumean sibyls; their number seems to have been "legion," though ingenious men have held that there was but one, which one led a vagrant life, uttered her oracles, and finally disappeared at Cumae, in Italy. Readers can choose for themselves, there are authorities for both opinions. They can also place whatever reliance upon their sayings they see fit. The Greeks and Romans held them in high veneration and built temples for their use; and among the Romans their books or sayings were considered sacred; so common is it as has been said for all nations to have some holy books.* Varro and Pliny† state that a woman came to one of the Tarquins, and offered a collection of sibylline verses in nine books for 300 pieces of gold, and upon being refused, burned three; she asked the same price for the six, and upon being refused, again burned three; when the emperor paid the price for the remaining three;

* See Professor Salisbury's Inaugural, New Haven, 1843.

† See Rees' Cyclopedia.

which were carefully kept till the civil wars of Marius and Scylla, when they were burned with the Capitol. Certain books were afterward gotten together, reputed to be sibylline, held sacred by the people, and made useful no doubt for state purposes—such as were *serviceable* were retained, others by decrees destroyed.

Sibylline books were quoted by Justin Martyr (and other of the fathers) in support of Christianity;* but Dr. Lardner does not think he held these scriptures as equal in authority to the Jewish.

It is perhaps worth while to remember in this connection that the Sibyls were always women—and so far as we can judge, such as were susceptible, and, in modern phrase, "impressible."

In the noble drama of Agamemnon, Eschylus thus presents to us the phrenzied Cassandra inspired by the god.

Chorus.

"She seems prophetic of her own misfortunes,
Retaining, though a slave, the divine spirit."

She foresees the death of Agamemnon and his children, by the hand of Clytemnestra, his wife:

Cassandra.

"There are convincing proofs. Look there! look there!
While pity drops a tear—the children butchered,
The father feeding on their roasted flesh!"

Chorus.

"This is the phrenzy of a mind possessed
With wildest ravings. Thy own woes thou wailest

* See Prideaux.

In mournful melody, like the sweet bird
That, darkling, pours his never-ceasing plaint;
And for her Itys, her lost Itys, wastes
In sweetest woe her melancholy life."

Then *Cassandra.*

"Woe, woe is me. Again the furious power
Swells in my laboring breast; again commands
My bursting voice; and what I speak is fate.
Look, look, behold those children! there they sit—
Such are the forms, that in the troubled night
Distract our sleep."

The closing words of the prophetess are among the most beautiful ones of the poet.

"Yet once more let me raise my mournful voice.
Thou sun, whose rising beams shall bless no more
These closing eyes! You, whose vindictive rage
Hangs o'er my hated murderers. O, avenge me.
Though a poor slave, I fall an easy prey!
This is the state of man—in prosperous fortune
A shadow passing light throws to the ground
Joy's baseless fabric; in adversity
Comes malice, with a sponge moistened in gall,*
And wipes each beauteous character away,
More than the first *this* melts my soul to pity."

THE URIM AND THUMMIN.

The high priests among the Hebrews consulted God in the most important affairs of the commonwealth, and received answers by the Urim and Thummim. After describing the making of the ephod or holy garment, and the breast-plate which

* See John xix. 29.

pertained to it—being bound "by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod, and that the breast-plate be not loosed from the ephod," we find these mystic things thus mentioned in the 28th chapter of Exodus, ver. 30, "And thou shalt put in the breast-plate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be upon Aaron's heart when he goeth in before the Lord."

We find in Numbers xxvii. 21, the uses of these, "And he shall stand before Eleazer, the priest, who shall ask for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord;" and again, at 1 Samuel xxviii. 6, "And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by the prophets."

What these means of divination were, remains—and for aught we can see must remain—unknown. Some critics have supposed that the engraved letters on the precious stones shone so as to give answers; some, that an audible voice issued from the breast-plate. Josephus suggested that they were stones which were lustrous when favorable, and dim when contrary; some assert that they were the secret letters of Jehovah's name. Dr. Prideaux and others suppose that when the high-priest appeared before the vail wearing the ephod and breast-plate, that the voice of God came from the mercy-seat: but as we find that David consulted,* when absent from the temple and in the forest, we dismiss Dr. Prideaux and his friends. Many of Moses's practises were derived from Egypt, and

* See 1 Samuel, chapters 23 and 30.

possibly this, for Diodorus Siculus tells of a custom among the Egyptians of placing upon the neck of the minister of Justice a collar of precious stones, called "Truth." We may believe that the Jewish oracle was like those of other nations.

Josephus further informs us that it was then two hundred years since the oracle had answered, that is, it ceased about one hundred and ten years before Jesus.*

"Dr. Pocock, of Oxford, in his commentary upon Hosea, hath a learned discourse of the Urim and Thummim, as also Dr. Spencer of Cambridge, that the priest had his visions in the stones of the breastplate."† He says further what seems analogous to the Hebrew stones, and he gives also a figure of the consecrated Berill, which was a perfect spire, "the diameter of it I guess to be something more than an inch." "It came first from Norfolk; a minister had it there, and a Call was to be used with it; afterward a miller had it, and both did work great cures with it (if curable), and in the Berill they did see either the receipt in writing, or else the herb. To this minister the spirits or angels would appear openly, and because the miller (who was his familiar friend), one day happened to see them, he gave him the aforesaid *Berill* and *Call*. By these angels the minister was forewarned of his death.

"Afterwards this Berill came into somebody's hand in London, who did tell strange things by it; insomuch that at last he was questioned for it, and

* See Calmet's Dict. † See John Aubrey's Miscellanies.

it was taken away by authority (it was about 1645").*

DIVINATION.

Is *Artificial* by means of external signs, from which the future is predicted; and—

Natural, which presages by some internal sense. This may be something which is inherent in all men, and is supposed to reside in that small spark of the Divine by which he is illuminated; or, it has been believed—and this is the one most practiced and most abused—to be by

Influx—by which means intelligence of the future is shed upon his favorites either by God or Satan.

Diodorus Siculus,† who got together a great amount of out-of-the-way knowledge, says, "They, the Britons, have a great veneration for those who discover future events; either from the flight of birds or the entrails of victims, and all the people yield an implicit faith to their oracles. On great occasions they practice a very strange and incredible manner of divination. They take a man who is to be sacrificed, and kill him with one stroke of a sword above the diaphragm—and by observing the posture in which he falls, his different convulsions, and the direction in which the blood flows from his body, they form their predictions according to certain rules which have

* John Aubrey, F.R.S. Miscellanies, London, 1721.

† Lib. v. c. 35.

been left them by their ancestors."—It is curious to note how entirely this last phrase illuminates the good, substantial, conservative, stick-in-the-mud character which walks in the "good old path;" having its own back covered and belly filled, cries, "Be ye clothed and fed, but above all don't change any thing!"

Nine sorts of divination are mentioned in the Old Testament, and the writer in Rees's Cyclopedia names some fifty methods; but as they all have a family likeness, and are shoots of one plant, we need not use up our paper or eyes by puzzling over them—a few will suffice for the purposes now in hand. To them let us give what heed we should. Shallow soils are barren—and so are weak and shallow souls; seed sown upon either withers. None such need to read this book, or any book, unless it be to keep them out of mischief, which thing it has been found troublesome to do. It has been said, perhaps wisely, "One fool is worse than two knaves;" but when they are united in the same person!—Is that class increasing, or is it not?

Sortes or Lots. This method of divination by lot seems to have been resorted to when it was not easy to decide otherwise, and it was believed that God would *then* interfere for the right. Such must have been the view of our eleven apostles who went about the choice of one in place of Judas; for they prayed and said, "Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether

of these two thou hast chosen. And they gave forth their lots,"* &c.

The method among the Greeks was to put letters in an urn; and, throwing some out, to make what reply they could of the chance arrangement of them. Another was to take the first words opened to in Homer as an answer.

The BATH-KOL among the Jews was of this sort; they taking their oracle from the first words they heard any one pronounce; and the Christians took theirs from the first words they opened to in their holy books. St. Augustine does not disapprove of this method of learning futurity, provided it be not used for worldly purposes.† It will not, perhaps, be wise to say aught against the saint's authority. Let those follow the practice who will. We may at least ask, how does it differ from what is called special providence?

Prideaux‡ gives us the following instance of the Bath-kol, or "daughter voice," from the Talmud: "Rabbi Joachanan and Rabbi Simeon Ben Lachish desiring to see the face of Rabbi Samuel, a Babylonish doctor, 'Let us follow,' they said, 'the hearing of Bath-kol.' Traveling, therefore, near a school, they heard the voice of a boy reading these words out of the first Samuel.§ *And Samuel died.* They observed this, and observed from it that their friend was dead, and so they found it had happened!" No one can find fault at the outspoken comment of the dean being repeated here. He says, "But this is enough to let the reader see

* See Acts ch. i. † Epist. 109. ‡ Part ii. book v. § xxv. 1.

that this Bath-kol was no such voice from heaven, as they pretend, but only a fantastical way of divination of their own invention," &c. So he can speak of *Bath-kol*, and not excite his own surprise; but directly upon it he can give us an instance of this kind of divination, as practiced among Christians at the consecration of the second bishop of Norwich, when the words opened to were—"*Not this man but Barabbas*"—which he tells us was fulfilled by his successor proving himself, in sort, a robber; and also that *he*, at any rate, will not deny that credit is due to the Sibylline oracles.* Let us take what we can get in this way. The Mahometans are not, it seems, outdone by the Hebrews or Christians (so called); they opening the sacred Koran to take omens from its pages, as has been before observed of other religionists.†

Divination by Arrows is mentioned by Calmet; and also by Ezekiel, xxi. 21. The method seems to have been to hold two arrows in each hand, with their points downward; the moving of the points in the right hand augured success to the purpose in hand—that of those in the left indicated failure. This is probably as good a way as any, and is recommended for its simplicity. Mahomet, by means of his Arabian inspiration, seems recklessly to have dealt a side blow to this, as well as to some other articles of religious faith. When he determined to abolish images and idol worship,

* Connection, part ii. ch. 9.

† See Irving's Mahomet, p. 349.

he found in the Caaba at Mecca, "Statues also of Abraham and Ishmael, represented with divining arrows in their hands; an outrage on their memories," said he, "being symbols of a diabolical act which they had never practiced." We, of course, are to give little heed to his words, for we do not as is now said, "belong to his parish."

By cups.—This is often practiced by children with tea-leaves; it also is simple, at least. This was in some sort Joseph's way, for we read in Genesis xliv. 5, of the cup found in Benjamin's sack. "Is not this it in which my Lord drinketh and whereby indeed he divineth?" Every one who chooseth may therefore follow his example.

ASTROLOGY.

The professors of Judicial Astrology hold "that the heavens are one great book wherein God has written the history of the world, and in which every man may read his own fortune, and the transactions of his time." They bring a great stock of learning to sustain their position, and any reasonable amount of facts to prove their honesty and truthfulness, yet many hard things are said of these sagacious professors, and indeed this ancient, learned and mystic profession has dwindled into a strange significance, and after a sort, like the good Samaritan, has fallen among thieves.

We have discovered other and simpler ways of reading the heavens; but it would not be wise to pass over this most venerable and vulnerable practice with disrespect—who knows what these same stars might take it upon themselves to do—to shoot perhaps!

Diodorus Siculus relates that the Chaldeans learned the art from the Egyptians, and such a tradition no doubt existed, for Egypt seems to have been the great mine in which all dug. The glory rests at any rate with them, and the Egyptian priests knew how to use, as others have done, their real knowledge for their own wise or unwise purposes. The heavens early drew out the admiration and wonder of men, and when astronomy revealed something to its students, astrology was ready to use this knowledge, and to stimulate a further search.*

The man who could foretel an eclipse, and was shrewd enough to use this wonderful phenomenon for ends and purposes which he at least knew of, could not but be a superior being, and of course in favor with the god or gods then in vogue. Power he found was sweet—and strange to say, he loved it and used it. How changed is the world now—who would lie, or cheat, or steal even, to get it!

But as a very elegant book upon this mystic study has been published in London, "which contains every requisite illustration of the celestial science,"† by one Raphael, evidently an adept in

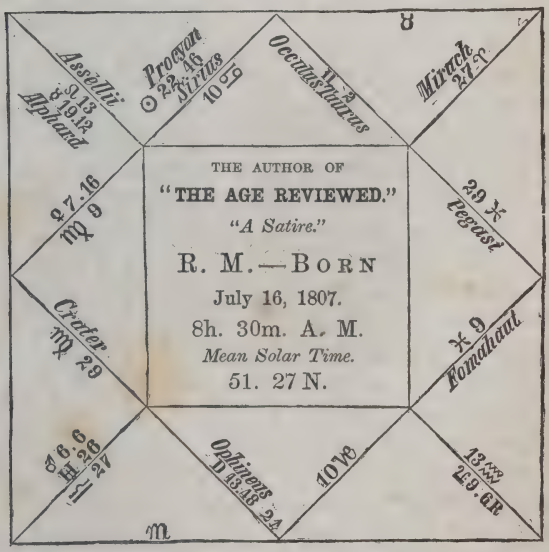
* Salisbury's Discourse, 1843.

† A Manual of Astronomy—Tegg and Son, 73 Cheapside—1828.

this curious art, it will be well to enlighten the ignorance of the reader by a few of his illustrations.

Let us see what a "nativity" looks like, a horoscope properly cast, with the "heleg" and the "red lion" and the "tail of the dragon" and the twelve houses, all complete and certain. It can not be doubted that this book contains what is worth knowing (indeed the author says so), and is the essence of the labors of ages and sages.

Natibity of a Modern Satirical Poet.



As this simple diagram will not, unfortunately, be clear to the ignorant observer, it will be well to give what explanation accompanies it, in these words*—the reader will pay attention.

"The recent production of this 'modern Juvenalist' (as some have termed him) having excited much curiosity in the literary world, is the author's chief reason for inserting his horoscope. The student will readily perceive the close zodiacal △ of the ☽ with ☿ and the planet ♀ arising in ♍ parallel to ☿ as the cause of his being a *poet;* but the desire for the *extraordinary*, which his satirical talent evinces, is solely produced by the almost perfect semi-quartile of the ☽ and ♅, which never fails to give originality of genius, as we have previously observed in a former part of this book; we predict that 'the author of the Age Reviewed' is destined to great *celebrity in the twenty-second year of his life*, probably by some eminent exertion of his poetical genius." The words underscored are so served by the author. Many would no doubt have italicized the cause of his being a poet—for we have been in the way of talking of "inspiration," and of "genius," &c., all of which may no doubt be dispensed with. It will be well after this to get the stars right, and then have a few poets born that we can rely on.

Raphael tells us at page 80, "that the careful student will doubtless be enabled to read the heavens with far more exactness than the greater part of those who affect to disbelieve astrology,

* P. 184.

can read their primer!" Fortunately the writer (I) does not wince at this well-timed thrust, which however will trouble some readers. One small difficulty lies in the way of entire faith—it is to know how this simple way of reading could have been brought about before the discovery of ♅, which stands for Herschel or Uranus, and which in the horoscope *now* given, accounts for the "satire." We learn at p. 59, that he (Herschel) is "cold, dry and windy," and at p. 70, that he is "replete with evil;" he must have played the very mischief with any honest and single-hearted astrologers, who, through so many ages, have been seeking after truth, not knowing of his existence. As Raphael "can not help* remarking the extreme ignorance and folly of those persons who require from the astrologer what they expect from no one else, infallibility," it will not be wise to press the matter. It is a pity that the niggardly publishers will not extend the size of their books, so that much of the interesting matter of these pages of Raphael might be again printed—so one or two extracts must close the book. "Mars in *horary questions* denotes symbolically, generals and commanders of armies, soldiers, military men, surgeons, chemists, physicians, apothecaries, druggists, armorers, watch-makers, barbers, all such as use implements of a sharp nature, all trades wherein fire is used; also curriers, smiths, carpenters, bricklayers, sculptors, cooks, tailors, bakers, &c. When ill placed, he denotes thieves, highwaymen, hang-

* P. 72.

men, jailers, and all 'cut-throat people.'" Every one must regret that such quiet and useful occupations as carpenters, bakers, &c., should be found in such company; with generals and doctors.

Riches and poverty interest, we think, all of our readers, because they pertain to this world, and are ever present. Raphael says,* "In these cases, if the ☉ and ☽ are strong every way, the native will become rich and extremely wealthy, at times to excess." But ♄ is the true author of troubles and the source (under Divine providence!) whence proceeds the "iron hand of griping poverty," and the perpetual mishaps of life, whereby the *native* is born to trouble, "even as the sparks fly upward."

Men would do well to find out about these signs in their own horoscopes, and let their destinies and stars do their work, instead of, as now, wearing away body and soul in the struggle. Reluctantly we dismiss Raphael, admiring his trust in Divine providence.

Mr. De Ward tells us, "There are two circumstances which impart peculiar interest to the natal hour, of which the first is the position of the heavenly bodies at the time the event occurs. Respectable Hindoos keep an astrologer in waiting, who, so soon as informed of the birth of the infant, 'casts his nativity, and opens the roll of its fate.' Having drawn up a paper minutely describing what of weal or woe is to befall the young stranger during his present, and sometimes his future life, he hands

* P. 153.

the same to his father, who deposits it in his house for reference when good or ill happens to his child.''*

The following advertisement will show that this mystic profession is not exploded; can it be possible that there is any prospect of their endowing a professorship in Yale College?

ASTROLOGY.

The celebrated Dr. C. W. ROBACK, Professor of Astrology, Astronomy, Phrenology and Geomancy, combined with CONJURATION, from Sweden, Office No. 7 Locust-street, Philadelphia, offers his services to the citizens of New-Haven.

He has been consulted by all the crowned heads of Europe, and enjoys a higher reputation as an Astrologer than any one living. Nativities calculated according to Geomancy—ladies $3, gentlemen $5. Persons at a distance can have their nativities drawn by sending the date of the day of their birth. All letters containing the above fee will receive immediate attention, and Nativities sent to any part of the world, written on durable paper; and he is prepared to make use of his power by conjuration on any of the following topics:—

Courtship, advice given for the successful accomplishment of a wealthy marriage; he has the power to redeem such as are given to the free use of the bottle; and for all cases of hazard, and for the recovery of stolen or lost property, and the purchasing of lottery tickets. Thousands of the above named cases have been done in this city and its vicinity, and in the United States, to the full satisfaction of all. Ten thousand nativities or horoscopes have been cast during the last four years while here.

Letters will answer every purpose, and will do as well as to call in person, and the mail is now so safe that persons need not fear to trust money through the Post Office. Dr. Roback receives from five hundred to one thousand letters monthly, and has never missed one.

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* India and the Hindoos, by F. De Ward. New York, 1850.

All letters will be religiously attended to, if prepaid. For more particulars, call at the office of the Journal, and get an Astrological Almanac, gratis.

C. W. ROBACK, 71 Locust-street, above Eighth,
Opposite the Musical Fund Hall, Philadelphia.

☞Be particular to mention the Post Office, County, and State. All communications kept religiously secret.

SECOND SIGHT.

A short notice of this matter which has interested the Scotch belief may not be unimportant, particularly as John Aubrey has evidently taken great pains to inquire and learn. The upshot of his inquiries was shortly this:—*

1. "Many instances of such knowledge *can* be given.

2. "The second sight relates only to things future.

3. "They foresee murders, drownings, weddings, burials, combats, manslaughters.

4. "They see all this visibly acted before their eyes.

5. "It is a thing very troublesome to have, and they would gladly be rid of it.

6. "Negatively not any godly, but such as are vicious. (This admits of further inquiry.)

7. "Several families in the Isle of Sky had it by succession before the *Gospel* came there.

8. "Some say they have it by compact with

* See Miscellanies, London, 1721.

the devil, some say by converse with those demons we call fairies."

"There was one James Mack-Coil-vicalester, alias Grant, in Glenbeum, near Kirkmichall, in Strathawin, who had this sight, who, I hear of several that were well acquainted with him, was a very honest man, and of right blameless conversation. He used, ordinarily, by looking to the fire, to foretell what strangers would come to his house the next day, or shortly thereafter, by their habit and arms, and sometimes also by their names; and if any one of his goods or cattle were missing, he would direct his servants to the very place where to find them, whether in a mire or upon dry ground; he would also tell if the beast were already dead, or if it would die ere they could come to it; and in winter, if they were thick about the fire-side, he would desire them to make room for some others that stood by, though they did not see them, else some of them would be quickly thrown into the midst of it. But whether this man saw any more than *Brownie* and *Meg Mullach*,* I am not very sure. Some say he saw more continually, and would often be very angry-like, and something troubled, nothing visibly moving him; others affirm he saw these two continually, and sometimes many more."

This supernatural gift now at least does not seem to exist except in novels; and we do not so much regret it when we learn that its Irish name is, or was, "TAISHITARAUGHK."

* Two ghosts of that neighborhood.

DREAMS.

"Dr. Abercrombie defines the difference between the two states (dreams and insanity), to be that in the latter the erroneous impression being permanent, affects the conduct; whereas, in dreaming, no influence on the conduct is produced, because the vision is dissipated on awaking."*

"I believe that dreams are uniformly the resuscitation or re-embodiment of thoughts which have formerly, in some shape or other, occupied the mind. I doubt if it be possible for a person to have, in a dream, *any* idea whose elements did not in some form, strike him at a previous period."†

"A disordered state of the stomach and liver will often produce dreams. Persons of bad digestion, especially hypochondriacs, are harassed with visions of the most frightful nature." Mrs. Radcliffe learned this, and was in the habit of supping upon indigestible things.‡

Time, in fact, seems to be in a great measure annihilated.

De Quincy, too, says under the influence of *opium*, "the sense of *space* and *time* were both powerfully affected—space swelled and was amplified to an extent of unutterable infinity. I sometimes seemed to have lived for seventy or a hundred years in one night."

This may be owing to the fact that incidents crowd and jostle one another, which would have taken years and ages to accomplish.

* Macknish on Sleep, p. 45. † Ibid. p. 49. ‡ Ibid.

Coleridge composed his Kubla Khan in a dream, and remembered a part of it which is now written: the train of ideas was started by the reading of "Purchas's Pilgrimage."

Cabanis, too, in dreams, was able to resolve difficult political questions which awake were to him involved. And why? because in sleep his mind was free from the thousand conventionalities and tricks of the diplomat. Most likely the same solution would have come from any sensible and sagacious man who was not a politician, as came through his own dream.

DREAMS MARVELOUS.—"On one occasion I remember to have dreamed that I possessed ubiquity, and was in twenty places at once. At another, that I was riding on my own back. Again, I dreamed that I was converted into a mighty pillar of stone, which reared its head in the midst of the desert where it stood for ages, till generation after generation melted away before it. Even in this state, though possessing no organs of sense, I saw every object—the mountains growing old, the trees decaying, &c."* Were they dreams, or was Macnish really inspired? Was not this supernatural? and, in some shadowy way, intended for his and our edification? We may well ask. No one needs to doubt Macnish's truthfulness. But MAHOMET'S DREAM! His visit to Heaven! Let those who will, read De Quincy's opium dreams; we will turn to the world-wide one of Mahomet's†—

* Macnish on Sleep, p. 88.

† In Prideaux's Life, and Irving's Sketch.

one which has provided tangible and comforting assurance to more men and nations than Christianity has yet touched; one, too, from which we may learn, if any thing can teach us. Let us also refer the reader to Isaiah's dreams, ch. i.; Zechariah's, ch. v.; Ezekiel's, i. and xxxvii.; Swedenborg's, in H. and H.: some cohere and some do not.

Xenophon, too, records many of his dreams, and *they* were to some purpose.* "Here Xenophon had a dream: he thought he was in chains, and that his chains breaking asunder of their own accord, he found himself at liberty, and went to whatsoever place he pleased. As soon as the first dawn of day appeared, he went to Chirisophus and told him he was in hopes every thing would go well, and told his dream. Chirisophus was pleased to hear it; and while the morn advanced, all the generals present offered sacrifice, and the very first victims were favorable." In consequence of this dream and sacrifice, they discover a ford where they prepare to cross the river. "In the mean time the priests offered sacrifice, and poured the blood of the victims into the river; and the enemy, from their bows and slings, discharged a volley of arrows and stones, but none of them reached our men. After the victims appeared favorable, all the soldiers sung the Pæan and shouted; all the women answering them, for there were many in the army."† They were victorious!

Cure of Dreams.—What will science do with

* Macnish on Sleep, p. 151. † Ibid. p. 153.

us next? What if Swedenborg himself had fallen into the hands of these moderns, and had been treated with "mild laxatives, magnesia, chalk, carb. of soda—attention must be given to diet—not to brood over any subject—bleeding and low diet are recommended,"* &c. &c. Do "mild laxatives" then cure the spirit of prophecy?"

PROPHETIC DREAMS.—Macnish† tells us of a young lady who saw the wraith of her lover at night. He informed her that he was slain, and at the battle of Corunna. She withered away and died; asking her friends to note the day of the death of her lover, which agreed with her own augury. Another case he gives‡ of a woman in a trance. "Suddenly I saw two by me clothed in long white garments, and methought I fell down upon my face in the dust, and they asked why I was so troubled in so great happiness. I replied, O let me have the same grant given to Hezekiah, that I may live fifteen years to see my daughter a woman; to which they answered, It is done. And then, at that instant, I awoke out of my trance! And Dr. Howlsworth did there affirm, that that day she died, did make *just* fifteen years from that time!"

"I do not doubt," says Macnish,§ "that the apparition of Julius Cæsar, which appeared to Brutus, and declared it would meet him at Philippi, was either a dream or a spectral illusion—probably the latter. Brutus, in all likelihood, had

* Macnish on Sleep, p. 100.
† Ibid. p. 105.
‡ Ibid. p. 110.
§ Ibid. p. 112.

some idea that the battle which was to decide his fate would be fought at Philippi; probably it was a good military position which he had fixed upon as a fit place to make a final stand, and he had done enough to Cæsar (enough!) to account for his own mind being painfully and constantly engrossed with the image of the assassinated Dictator. Hence the verification of the supposed warning—hence the easy explanation of a supposed preternatural event." So then Mr. Macnish adds to our doubts, another, whether *any* apparition appeared! for which fact we have only a tradition—it was of no use if it did—well, well.

DREAMS VERIFY THEMSELVES.—And again, he says—mark him, reader—"Men dream every now and then, that they will die on a certain day, yet how seldom do we see these predictions fulfilled! In very delicate people, indeed, such a visionary communication, by acting fatally upon the mind, might be the means of occasioning its own fulfillment. In such cases, it has been customary for the friends of the person to put back the clock an hour or two so as to let the fatal period pass."* Wise friends, surely; but what do they in thus meddling with the mysterious workings of prophecy? We would know that.

"Things of trifling moment frequently accomplish, what we seriously foretell, and dreams in particular will often prove of little or no importance."†

* See Macnish, p. 115.

† One of the Magi quoted by Herodotus, bk. 1.

RESULTS.—"It may be added that this remarkable circumstance was attended with bad consequences to Mr. R., whose health and spirits were greatly impaired, by the attention which he thought himself obliged to pay to the visions of the night;" and, says the shrewd Macnish, "had he been acquainted with the nature of the brain, he would have traced the whole chain of events to their true source; but, being ignorant of this, he became the victim of superstition and his life was rendered miserable." Mr. Macnish probably forgets that it is *easier* to explain all by supernatural interference —quicker, at least—to say nothing of the charm which hangs about the idea that God's spirits have marked us for some peculiar thing!

We find the interpreters of dreams were not so safe once as they are now. Should they mistake *now* and foretell falsely, nothing comes of it but that *you* should pocket the disappointment, and the prophet the fee—one being perhaps a fool and the other a knave—each gets his customary reward.

But then, in those good old times we hearken to a different tale; "Astyages," so the story-teller Herodotus says,* "hearing of the ignominious defeat of his army, continued to menace Cyrus, &c., but the first thing he did was to crucify the Magi,†

* Book i. § cxxviii.

† "Their Magi are a distinct body of men, having many peculiarities which distinguish them from others, and from the Egyptian priests in particular. These last think it essential to their sanctity to destroy no animals but the victims of sacrifice. The Magi except a man and a dog, but put to death other animals without compunction." Herodotus, book i. § cxl.

who had prevailed upon him to send Cyrus away." In the Jewish history of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar, we find a like fate hanging over the soothsayers, who not knowing the king's dream, could *not* interpret it, and not bold enough to dream a dream which would answer the purpose, and one which they *could* interpret, were in imminent danger, as we learn, of being eaten up, by those lions which did respect the Lord's anointed. They however were saved by one Daniel, who as some think, showed himself wiser in the matter of the king's dream, than in his salvation of his rivals, who, of course, ever after hated him.

John Aubrey, F.R.S., gives in his Miscellanies (from Pliny), one of Galen's three dreams, thus—"The third most worthy of being called a miracle, was, when being twice admonished in his sleep to cut the artery that lies between the forefinger and the thumb, and doing it accordingly, was freed from a continual daily pain with which he was afflicted in that part where the liver is joined to the midriff."

Again; and this also is very curious, as indicating the basis of a new, and as yet untried, medical "pathy."

"A little home-bred slave, that was a darling favorite of Pericles, Prince of the Athenians, and who, while a temple was building in the Prince's Palace, had climbed up to the very top of the pinnacle, and tumbled down from that prodigious height; is said to have been cured of his fall by the herb *mug-wort* or *Parthenium*, which was shown to Per-

icles in a dream, by Minerva; from hence it took the name of Parthenium, and is attributed to that goddess."*

Again—this remarkable dream is given by Aubrey, "My Lady Seymor dreamt that she found a nest with nine *Finches* in it. And so many children she had by the Earl of Winchelsea, whose name is *Finch!*"

Again, and this is also medical—"A gentlewoman dreamt that a Poultess of Blew Currants would cure her sore throat, and it did so. She was a pious woman, and affirmed it to be true."

But alas, here we are out—Mrs. Cl—— of S. in the county of S., had a beloved daughter, who had been a long time ill, and received no benefit from physicians. She dreamed that a friend of hers, deceased, told her that if she gave her daughter a Drench of Yewgh, pounded, she would recover; she gave her the drench, and it killed her!" And, adds Mr. Aubrey, "this was about the year 1670 or 1671. I knew the family."

A few more of these medical receipts may be of service to enterprising young men in that profession, which already numbers its thousands of men, and its "one woman."

"To cure a Thrush.—Take a living frog and hold it in a cloth, that it does not go down the child's mouth; and put the head into the child's mouth, till it be dead (the frog or the child?); and then take another frog and do the same."

* Pliny's Natural History, book xxii.

To CURE THE TOOTH-ACHE.—Take a new nail and make the gum bleed with it, and then drive it into an oak. This did cure William Neale, Sir William Neale's son, a very stout gentleman, when he was almost mad with the pain, and had a mind to have pistoled himself.

To HINDER THE NIGHTMARE.—They hang in a string a flint with a hole in it (naturally), by the manger; but best of all they say, hung about their necks, and a flint will do it that hath not a hole in it. It is to prevent the nightmare, viz., the hag from riding their horses, which will sometimes sweat all night, the flint thus hung does hinder it.

Two more of these are important. This first may not be important to the Faculty, because, so far as we know, any uncircumcised Philistine may make it.

To CURE AN AGUE.—Write this following spell in parchment, and wear it about your neck. It must be written triangularly.

A B R A C A D A B R A
A B R A C A D A B R
A B R A C A D A B
A B R A C A D A
A B R A C A D
A B R A C A
A B R A C
A B R A
A B R
A B
A

Here is the other, of vast importance, and not to be despised, for it has been *tried.*

TO KNOW WHOM ONE SHALL MARRY.—You must lie in another country, and knit the left garter about the right legged stocking (let the other garter and stocking alone), and as you rehearse the following verses, at every comma knit a knot.

"This knot I knit,
To know the thing, I know not yet,
That I may see,
The man (woman) that shall, my husband (wife) be,
How he goes, and what he wears,
And what he does all days, and years."

One further important fact will not be uninteresting to a very large class of deserving persons. Aspasia was poor, and had a swelling,* but could get no relief—at last a dove seemed to appear to her as she slept, which, being changed to a woman said—"Be of good courage, and bid a long farewell to physicians and their medicines, take of the dried rose of *Venus* garlands, which, being pounded, apply to the swelling." "After the maid had understood and made trial of this, the tumor was wholly assuaged; and Aspasia, recovering her beauty by means of the goddess, did once again appear the fairest among her virgin companions, enriched with graces far above any of the rest. Of yellow hair, locks a little curling, she had great eyes, somewhat hawk-nosed, ears short, skin delicate, complexion like roses. Her lips were red, teeth whiter than snow, small insteps, her voice

* Read Ælian, in John Aubrey.

sweet and smooth, that whosoever heard her might justly say he heard the voice of a syren." Can we, or can we not, add to this description one other quality invented or discovered by Mr. Gall, and called by him Amativeness, large. Of what she grew to be when fully ripe we have heard but will not now repeat—and altogether in consequence of that dream!

DEMONS.

Homer calls the gods dæmons, and dæmons gods. Either term seems to have suited him and some of the ancients. Another opinion was that they were intermediate between men and gods—and perhaps that they had once been men;* indeed it must have been so, for Plutarch speaks of "human souls as commencing, first heroes, then dæmons, and afterward as advancing to a more sublime degree." One practice these heathens had, which can not be counted as altogether foolish, it is thus given by Philo of Byblus: "The most ancient of the barbarians, especially the Phenicians and Egyptians, from whom other people derived this custom, accounted those the GREATEST GODS who had found out things most necessary and useful in life—*and had been benefactors to mankind.*"† The reader may compare our practices with theirs, and draw his own conclusions as to what heathenishness really is.

The term demon, however, is now used to mean

* See Plutarch, Plato, &c. † See also Farmer on Miracles.

malignant spirits, and comes so to us from the New Testament writers, as many of our notions upon such subjects do; though Mr. Farmer in his elaborate work concludes that they may be either good or bad—at any rate are distinct from what are called the "Devil and his angels." So far we can repose in security. Alas, no! not so much as this is vouchsafed to mortal men, who in their frantic gropings for something "definite, tangible, real," are apt, for very despair, to grasp at something monstrous. Even this, "whether or no the demon is the imp of the devil?" remains in doubt, for Dr. Lardner* seems to think them identical, and brings Scripture to prove it.

But *Demoniacal Possession*—who doubts that? Who doubts that the devils, when they found that they must go, as Mark tells us,† should have besought, saying, "Send us into the swine?" And who doubts that the swine should have drowned themselves—or that the owner of the swine should have been both surprised and grieved? Or who doubts that the "whole multitude of the country round about besought HIM to depart from them?"‡

That the New Testament writers had full faith in this demoniacal possession is beyond question, whatever we may think of Jesus's own belief; yet it is equally true that there is no vestige of their teaching such belief, or giving it countenance except by not denying it. If usage is of any value

* Works, vol i. p. 448.

† Ch. v. ver. 12.

‡ Luke ch. viii. ver. 37.

to the incredulous, they may refer to Josephus's* words, which assert that the method of exorcism prescribed by Solomon "prevailed or succeeded greatly among them down to the present time." This method is not specified; but as we have the satisfaction of knowing that his seal bore the Tetragammaton, "the mystic letters which are the name of God," which rendered him in a sort omnipotent as well as omniscient, we can as readily believe that he should have done these magical things, as to have composed a "sacred song," or have done some other of his recorded deeds.

From time to time, we have had vague and uncertain rumors that this signet, this "name of God" was yet in existence here below, and many have fondly hoped that it was so, and that by it distracting doubts might be resolved; but it has, so far, hidden itself from the vulgar soul. The Arabs and some others are said yet to hold on to this faith; for, as they truly say, if we give up this belief where shall we go?—words which have been echoed by men of this day, and in one sense by the godlike.†

The answer may not be so plain to them as to some singular men who would recklessly say—to the devil, of course. Indeed, it may be a matter of painful interest to them, as well as to us, should they at any time discover that the truth is learned through other ways than by signets and stones; that while looking for these unreal and mystic

* Ant. I, viii.

† See Webster's Speech.

signs, they have quite overlooked what is all around them, which, though mystic, is surely REAL.

It is not altogether insignificant for us to know that there are (so it is said) periods in history when these *demoniacs*, or possessed persons become numerous to a fearful degree. These periods are marked in the carnal history of man by dire miseries—of body, or of soul, or of both. When the strong oppress the weak, decreeing injustice by law, as men are prone to do, having such a wish for power that nothing can control it—not even their own wisdom; when the grinding sense of injustice breaks down the grains of self-respect and of hope (which every man should garner up in himself), as the mere earthly wheat is brought to dust between the relentless stones of the miller; when plunder, either by the strong hand, or that more fatal kind of the merciless official, renders labor unsafe and starvation sure, then DESPAIR steps in and reaps down the true and noble in man, and sows *his* tares of demonism and misery.

Those who doubt may look with wondering eyes at wonderful illustrations scattered with a too free hand through history—at the French Revolution, the decay of Rome, the destruction of Jerusalem—and learn wisdom before he too blindly and frantically grasps at wealth and power at such a cost.

Most complete are the results of this misery in those nations which have tasted of freedom and justice—such as Rome and Israel—and less wide

among people who have, like the Sudras and the Blacks, grown chronic in their slavery.

That these ancients, believing some things which we do not, holding to special action rather than to general law, should have had a demon for each man (or, indeed, for each act or thought, for some were filled with a legion), need not excite our wonder; neither need it shake our faith in their wisdom, for *that* they had. We are to choose their good, and not gloat over the foolish.

It is also true that the ancients had a sort of dim or distinct faith in the words which these demoniacs uttered, such as we have seen was effective in the phrenetics of the oracles. Let *us* listen also to the striking truths which we sometimes hear in our mad-houses—truths which ought to be transplanted into our pulpits, and be heard for edification. He must be truly an infidel who, opening his eyes upon our "Retreats" and "Hospitals" and "Asylums," vainly and vaguely iterates and reiterates that we ought to be thankful that there are none now "possessed!" Heavens! none!—

When Dr. Howe tells us that in Massachusetts alone we may count on hundreds perhaps thousands.

"Socrates said of his dæmon, that he many times perceived a voice warning him by divine instinct, which, saith he, when it comes, signifieth a dissuasion from that which I am going to do, but never persuades to do any thing."*

Many persons shrewdly suspect that the wise gossip was laughing in his eye; and especially

* John Aubrey, from Ælian.

from this latter fact; for the doing of *any thing*, he was careful to avoid much to Mrs. S.'s disgust; and report said, that he came finally to spend more of his time with his familiar than with his Xantippe.

SPECTRES.

We read of persons having been attended with a familiar or spirit. SOCRATES is instanced, though we have no reason to believe that he supposed himself possessed with an appearance; his was an inward monitor, which he was man enough or god enough to listen to; nor is it worth while to call him a fool.

Quite another thing was the spirit which Tasso, in his melancholy fits, was visited by. "There"—he says—"there is the friendly spirit that is come to converse with me; look, and you will be convinced of all I have said." And Manso looked, but Manso did not see a spirit; and incredulous Manso remains, for aught we know, a skeptic to this day. Who shall we pity most—the spirit, Tasso, or Manso?*

But who will doubt the visions of angels and spirits which, from time to time, have given to religious and other enthusiasts communications from on high—who? Macnish is he: a brave man. He says,† "They seem to hear sounds and see

* See Hoole's Tasso, p. 48. Lond. 1797.

† Macnish on Sleep, p. 219.

forms which have no existence, and believing in the reality of such impressions, consider themselves highly favored by the Almighty. These feelings prevailed much during the persecutions in Scotland. Nothing was more common than for the Covenanter by the lonely hill-side to have what he supposed a special message from God, and even to see the angel who brought it, standing before him, encouraging him to steadfastness in his religious principles." Some may charge that these men were liars, and would deceive others and exalt themselves. I will not do so; for I do not doubt *their own belief*, in the reality of what they saw.

Dr. Abercrombie tells us of an instance which occurred to Dr. Gregory. He had gone to the north country, by sea, to visit a lady, a near relation, in whom he felt deeply interested, and who was in an advanced state of consumption. In returning from the visit, he had taken a moderate dose of laudanum [the greater fool he] with the view of preventing sea-sickness, and was lying on the couch of his cabin, when the figure of the lady appeared before him in so distinct a manner that her actual presence could not have been more vivid. He was quite awake and fully sensible that it was a phantasm produced by the opiate, along with his intense mental feeling; but he was unable, by any effort, to banish the vision.

Walter Scott, too, tells us* of having, after reading or talking about Byron, seen his figure

* See Demonology and Witchcraft.

distinctly standing in his library, which figure, after a few moments, resolved itself into a stand of shawls and coats.

The sister of Fitz-Green Halleck told the writer of an experience of the same kind. One of her neighbors she saw pass through her room and go out of the door; but when she spoke of it a few minutes after to others who were in the room, she found it was personal to herself.

But why multiply cases. "These wraiths did not predict the deaths of their owners, they were not sent to enforce any theological or other revelation; and, of course, are of no account." Those who choose to take such a view of them are at liberty to do it. Some can believe what they wish to believe—reject the rest: happy ones they are—who shall deny that?

SOLUTION OF SPECTRES.

But here comes again this confounded Macnish, with his reasonable and natural solutions. "For nearly two years, Miss S. L. was free from her frontal headaches and—mark the coincidence—untroubled by visions or any other illusive perceptions."*

It seems as though we were not to be allowed to enjoy our spectres in peace, and that the only exorcist now is the doctor with his drugs—by-and-

* Macnish on Sleep, p. 233.

by it may be, that there will not be more than once a year a good round case of nightmare; and one's nervous system not being shocked with the horrid cries of the ridden, will relapse into a state of peaceable quiet and stagnation dreadful to contemplate! Let each be prepared for the worst.

But DELIRIUM-TREMENS, thank Heaven, still furnishes us with an inexhaustible supply of most excellent spectres—those who are incredulous may try it—and all, except those Utopians who fancy that rum will finally, after ages, disappear, will hold on to these spectres, and this method of production, when all else fails. "In this disease they are usually of a horrible, a disgusting, or a frightful nature." But what of that? they show us, distinctly, that there *are* spectres, nevertheless. And though, as Dr. Willan says, "I am convinced that more than one eighth (!) of all the deaths which take place in persons above twenty years of age, happen prematurely, through excess of drinking spirits;" it is not easy to see how the spectres are to blame, or, indeed, can properly be dispensed with.

It is true that one Lettsom says, "If these *horrors* from rum seize him in bed, when waking from slumber he springs up with a sense of suffocation and the horrors of frightful objects around him"—and the simple-hearted man forthwith advises against the *first use of one little drop*. The Indians use the same word (*ram-jam*) to signify drunkard and phrenetic. Might we for one moment suppose that the spectres in *all* cases arise (when they do

arise) under some one law;—who knows but the matter would be simplified? *I*, however, shirk all responsibility in this matter.

"No notion"—so Plutarch says, and we may well believe him—"was more prevalent in the heathen world, from the earliest ages, than that of the power of ghosts to haunt and torment mankind, particularly the ghosts of those who died a violent death." From the heathens the same or similar opinions passed to the Jews, whose doctors taught "that the souls of the damned are, for some time, changed into devils, in order to be employed in tormenting mankind."* Rather a poor business one would think, and quite worthy of Burns's sharp appeal (To the Deil), which inquiring minds will do well to look into.

Any skeptic will be glad to learn that there are some vestiges yet remaining of those good old practices, when spectres had their liberty as well as men; and the following extracts will be interesting:—

The *Fata Morgana*, in some peculiar states of the atmosphere, is seen at the Straits of Messina, between Italy and Sicily. Upon the surface of the water, superb palaces, with their balconies and windows, lofty towers, herds and flocks—armies of men on horseback and on foot, &c. &c.

In the Cumberland Hills in England, figures on horseback and on foot, have been seen riding at rapid rates on the crags where it is hardly possible for a man to scramble. The same appearances

* Vide Calmet's Dict.

have been seen on the Scotch hills, and in some cases bodies of armed men* were observed exercising and performing their evolutions in such remarkable spots.

The *Spectre of the Brocken* is described by Mr. Hane, who saw it on the 23d May, 1797. "After having been at the summit of the mountain no less than thirty times, he at last saw the object of his curiosity. The sun rose about four o'clock in the morning, through a serene atmosphere. In the south-west, toward Achtermannshahe, a brisk west wind carried before it the transparent vapors which had not yet been condensed into thick heavy clouds. About a quarter past four he went toward the inn, and looked round to see whether the atmosphere would afford him a free prospect towards the southwest, when he observed at a very great distance, toward Achtermannshahe, a human figure of a monstrous size. His hat having been almost carried away by a gust of wind, he suddenly raised his hand to his head to protect his hat, and the colossal figure did the same. He immediately made another movement by bending his body, an action which was repeated by the spectral figure. Mr. Hane was desirous of making other experiments, when the figure disappeared. He remained, however, in the same position expecting its return, and in a few minutes it made its appearance, when it mimicked his gestures as before. He then called the landlord, and having both taken the position which he had before, they

* Preceding the Revolution of 1745.

looked toward the A. but saw nothing. In a very short space of time, however, two colossal figures were formed over the eminence, and after bending their bodies and imitating the gestures of the two spectators, they disappeared. Retaining their positions and keeping their eyes still fixed upon the same spot, the two gigantic spectres again appeared, and were joined by a third." *

Most of these and kindred appearances have been explained satisfactorily—so these men of science pretend—by the known laws of light and optics. Reflection and refraction are two principles now well understood, by whose means this has been done. The Spectres of the Brocken were plainly the shadows of the figures cast upon clouds or vapors. The phantom ships and like appearances, such as the horsemen in the hills, are beyond doubt reflections of real objects upon vapors or denser strata of the atmosphere. The whole supernatural theory has disappeared; though the wonderful character of the appearance still remains, as we trust it always will, but only to excite our admiration rather than our fears; and to stimulate the mind to the unending search into the great LAWS of the creation.

* Sir D. Brewster, Nat. Mag.

THE END.

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